

## AH5500 – NON-MEDICAL CANNABIS

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, St'át'imc, syilx, and Tsilhqot'in Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

Interior Health recognizes that diversity in the workplace shapes values, attitudes, expectations, perception of self and others and in turn impacts behaviours in the workplace. The dimensions of a diverse workplace include the protected characteristics under the human rights code of: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, criminal or summary conviction unrelated to employment.

### 1.0 PURPOSE

To foster a client-centred and harm reduction approach when responding to Client's use of Non-Medical Cannabis.

### 2.0 DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
<i>Cannabis</i>	<i>A substance derived from the Cannabis plant, including constitutes of Cannabis and cannabinoids. Examples include: dried preparations (flower/bud/leaf), edibles, lotions, creams, oils, capsules or concentrates.</i>
<i>Client</i>	<i>Any individual receiving care or services from Interior Health. Includes patients, long-term care residents and any person receiving care. Note that different terms may be used in different care settings.</i>
<i>Clinical Staff</i>	<i>A person licensed, certified or registered to provide health care. For the purposes of this policy, refers to registered nurses (RN), licensed practical nurses (LPN), registered psychiatric nurses (RPN), nurse practitioners (NP), pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, physicians, associate physicians, physician assistants, midwives, dentists, and allied health professionals who practice in Interior Health programs and Premises.</i>
<i>Employee</i>	<i>A person currently employed by Interior Health in a full-time, part-time, and/or term-specific position. For the purposes of this policy, includes Clinical Staff, students, volunteers, contractors, and other persons working or acting on behalf of Interior Health.</i>
<i>Interior Health Premises</i>	<i>Includes all Interior Health owned, operated, leased, or contracted facilities and grounds where care is provided by Interior Health Staff.</i>

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Date Approved: January 2025	Date(s) Reviewed-r/Revised-R:
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<i>Licensed Seller</i>	<i>Outlets authorized by the federal or provincial government to sell Cannabis. Includes provincially licensed sellers of Cannabis for medical purposes, provincial or territorial retail outlets, or provincial or territorial authorized online sales platforms.</i>
<i>Medical Cannabis</i>	<i>Includes 'Cannabis for Medical Purposes' as defined under the Cannabis Act. Further, it includes legally sourced cannabis products where a prescriber order is in place for the treatment of a medical condition.</i>
<i>Most Responsible Practitioner (MRP)</i>	<i>The Most Responsible Practitioner is the Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Dentist, or Midwife whose name appears in the Client's chart designated as the MRP and who has overall responsibility for directing and coordinating the care and management of an individual patient.</i>
<i>Non-Medical Cannabis</i>	<i>Includes personally sourced Cannabis products (i.e., oils, topical creams, vaporizers, edibles, beverages, etc.) where a physician and/or nurse practitioner order is NOT in place and/or is not necessary. Includes both legally (i.e., government sourced or obtained from a Licensed Seller) and illicitly sourced Cannabis products. Used for recreational purposes or other self-identified reasons.</i>

### 3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 Possession and use of Non-Medical Cannabis is permitted on all Interior Health (IH) Premises with the following exceptions:
  - 3.1.1 Smoking or vaporizing Medical or Non-Medical Cannabis remains non-permitted, as per the [AV2000 Smoke Free Environment Policy](#).
  - 3.1.2 For the use of Medical Cannabis on IH Premises, please refer to the [PHK1000 Medical Cannabis Policy](#).
  - 3.1.3 It is illegal for people less than 19 years of age to possess Non-Medical Cannabis
- 3.2 Client's Non-Medical Cannabis is treated as a personal effect per the [AK0700 Client Valuables & Personal Effects Policy](#).
  - 3.2.1 Do not dispose of a Client's Cannabis without the Client's consent.
  - 3.2.2 Unclaimed Cannabis products and accessories left behind after Client discharge will follow the procedures outlined in the [AK0700 Client Valuables & Personal Effects Policy](#).
  - 3.2.3 Support Clients to store Non-Medical Cannabis for safekeeping as per the [AK0700 Client Valuables & Personal Effects Policy](#). If required, remove and store Non-Medical Cannabis when:
    - Client is incapable;
    - There is a specific and compelling safety concern within inpatient units; or

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- Client is admitted to a unit where substance possession remains non-permitted (withdrawal units and settings where abstinence-based recovery services are provided).
- 3.2.4 To mitigate any risks associated with withdrawal, the Most Responsible Practitioner (MRP) must offer clinical supports and interventions to Clients whose Non-Medical Cannabis products are taken into safekeeping.
- 3.3 Clinical Staff are not responsible for determining whether a Clients' Non-Medical Cannabis has been sourced from a Licensed Seller.
- 3.4 Interior Health owned, operated, leased, or contracted facilities and grounds where services are provided, must follow the [AV0100 Occupational Health and Safety Program](#) to make sure all known, or reasonably foreseeable health or safety hazards workers are likely to be exposed to while performing their work are eliminated or controlled.
- 3.5 **Care Planning**
  - 3.5.1 Develop and implement culturally safe, trauma informed care plans for Client's who use Non-Medical Cannabis in alignment with [AH5000 Harm Reduction - People Who Use Substances Policy](#).
  - 3.5.2 Respect Clients who have an established care plan that incorporates Non-Medical Cannabis products.
  - 3.5.3 Understand MRP orders are not required for a Client's use of Non-Medical Cannabis.
  - 3.5.4 If a Client engages in behaviours identified as posing a risk to others and/or self as a result of Non-Medical Cannabis use, discussions will occur with the Client, the MRP and the Clients' care team to ensure risks are mitigated within the Client's care plan.
  - 3.5.5 Encourage effective communication between Client, MRP and Clinical Staff about the use of personal medications, traditional medications, supplements and substances.

## 4.0 PROCEDURES

### 4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

#### 4.1.1 Employees

- Refer to the [AK0700 Client Valuables & Personal Effects Policy](#) for guidance on managing Client personal effects.
- Refer to any disrespectful, aggressive or violent behaviour as per the [AV2500 Violence Prevention Program Policy](#).
  - If a Client is suspected of being acutely intoxicated, any intervention must first prioritize protecting the public, other Clients, Employees, and the physical safety of the suspected intoxicated Client (e.g., injury/fall prevention).
- Follow the [Risk Management Process](#) as needed to identify, assess, manage and monitor related risks.

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### 4.1.2 Most Responsible Practitioner

- Discuss with Client potential or apparent drug interactions, side effects, benefits, safety risks/concerns and/or other impacts related to the Client's use of Non-Medical Cannabis.

### 4.1.3 Clinical Staff

- Use discretion to assist a Client who uses Non-Medical Cannabis (e.g., application of topical cream/oils, open containers, pour liquid products etc.).
- Wear clean gloves prior to handling and/or application of any Cannabis product.
- Do not purchase any Cannabis products on behalf of a Client.
- Consider whether a Client may be using Cannabis to address the personal treatment of a medical condition and notify the MRP of any related clinical observations and/or concerns.
- Document in charting notes any objective clinical observations and/or concerns related to the Client's Non-Medical Cannabis use. Work with MRP to provide ongoing monitoring of use, if necessary.
- Do not document a Client's Non-Medical Cannabis use in the Client's Medication Administration Record.

### 4.1.4 Client

- Advise their MRP of their Non-Medical Cannabis use so that the MRP may consider any possible drug or treatment interactions.
  - If Non-Medical Cannabis use is suspected but not disclosed by the client, then the MRP should ensure the risks are mitigated within the Client's care plan (see section 3.5 Care Planning).
- Consume/use their Non-Medical Cannabis in their personal spaces and not in common areas, with the exception of smoking or vaporizing Cannabis, which must be done off IH Premises, as per the [AV2000 Smoke Free Environment Policy](#).
- Consume/use their Non-Medical Cannabis in a safe and responsible manner that recognizes and respects the rights of Employees and other Clients and does not endanger others.
- Must not engage in the sharing, distribution, or sale of their personal Non-Medical Cannabis products.
- Must procure their own supply of Non-Medical Cannabis.
- Must not grow Cannabis plants for medical or non-medical purposes on any IH Premises.

## 5.0 REFERENCES

1. Related IH policies/resources:

- [PHK1000 - Medical Cannabis Policy](#)

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## AH5500 – NON-MEDICAL CANNABIS

- Decision Tool for Cannabis Policy Application
  - [AU0200 - Substance Use Disorder](#)
  - [AU0200 - Substance Use Disorder Procedural Guidelines](#)
  - [AH5000 - Harm Reduction - People Who Use Substances](#)
  - [AV2000 - Smoke Free Environment](#)
  - [AK0700 - Client Valuables & Personal Effects](#)
  - [AV0100 - Occupational Health and Safety Program](#)
  - [AV2500 Violence Prevention Program Policy](#)
  - [Safe Work Procedure: Patient Own Medications – in Care Settings](#)
  - [Risk Management Process](#)
  - [Managed Risk Agreement – Long-term Care Services](#)
2. Government of BC - [Residents' Bill of Rights](#)
  3. Government of BC - [Cannabis Control and Licensing Act](#)
  4. Government of Canada - [Cannabis Act](#)
  5. Government of Canada - [Cannabis Information](#)
  6. Government of Canada - [Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines](#)
  7. Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, University of Victoria – [Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines for Youth, By Youth](#)
  8. Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction – [A guide to Cannabis for Older Adults](#)
  9. Laboratoire de recherche Didier Jutras-Aswad – [Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines for Psychosis](#)
  10. Huxley-Reicher Z, Puglisi LB, Tetrault JM, et al. Response to substance use during hospitalization: A survey study of current and ideal policies and practices. J Hosp Med. 2023;1-6. doi:10.1002/jhm.13162.
  11. Martin M, Snyder HR, Otway G, Holpit L, Day LW, Seidman D. In-hospital Substance Use Policies: An Opportunity to Advance Equity, Reduce Stigma, and Offer Evidence-based Addiction Care. J Addict Med. 2023 Jan-Feb 01;17(1):10-12. doi: 10.1097/ADM.0000000000001046. Epub 2022 Aug 2. PMID: 35914181; PMCID: PMC9897266.
  12. Northern Health Authority. (2024). Client Possession of Alcohol or Non-Medical Cannabis for Personal Use.
  13. Providence Health Care. (March 3, 2021). Cannabis for Non-Medical Purposes.
  14. Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. (August 10, 2022). Cannabis for Non-Medical Purposes.

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