



## OHA POSITION STATEMENT REGARDING CANNABIS: March 2019

Cannabis as a medicine has experienced a significant resurgence within the past two decades. From simple pain relief to serious illness, there is barely a stone left unturned in the exploration of health issues that this plant could potentially treat. On October 17, 2018, Canada legalized the use of recreational cannabis in conjunction with a pre-existing medical program. Leading up to this decision there has been a renewed interest in both the use and interest in this plant as a potent herbal medicine.

Although there are many benefits to these legal liberties and growing popularity, we as professional herbal practitioners believe that proper education and guidance is required to safely and effectively navigate this relatively new territory in Canada. We assert that our services as trained herbal clinicians, consultants, educators and medicine makers naturally elect us as prime candidates to help guide the industry and the individual to make more informed, healthy, holistic and safe choices in regards to Cannabis.

Trained in both traditional systems and modern scientific understanding and application of plant-based medicine, we as modern Western herbal practitioners view Cannabis as just another herb within our knowledge base of Materia Medica. In a traditional context (i.e. Ayurveda, TCM and Western Herbal Medicine), Cannabis is never used as a single herb. It is only utilized as part of a balanced and individualized compound formula/protocol of multiple herbs, alongside dietary and lifestyle changes. This synergetic method of use both increases the effectiveness of the plant and mitigates potential side effects. When used improperly, traditional systems of medicine consider the plant toxic – which is in stark contrast from the western perspective of it being non-toxic.

There are numerous practitioners who have obtained additional education with regard to this medicinal plant. That said, there are strict regulations around selling, distributing and prescribing this plant. Here are some points to be aware of regarding cannabis regulation:

- As of October 17, 2018, Cannabis is listed under the Controlled Drug and Substances Act. It is still considered a controlled substance and is now listed as a subsection under The Act.
- A herbal practitioner can not prescribe, sell or distribute Cannabis; only an MD can prescribe. A herbal practitioner can not stock nor dispense Cannabis from any source whatsoever, including legal Cannabis from licensed retailers, personal medical licenses and general personal production (i.e. 4 plant per household).
- A herbal practitioner can not compound/manufacture remedies including Cannabis using/containing organic solvents (i.e. alcohol), even if their client has a legal prescription.
- A herbal practitioner can offer advice and education concerning Cannabis, within the scope of their personal practice, knowledge base and provincial/ federal laws.
- A herbal practitioner can recommend a client to seek further advice and/or prescription from an MD.

While we will continue to monitor further changes regarding regulations, it is important to remain aware of the current legal boundaries as herbal practitioners. As this plant gains momentum in the public sphere for its powerful healing properties, we hope a broader understanding of herbs and healing plant medicine begins to be embraced within our culture. Please visit the following links to stay informed:

Cannabis Act: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-24.5/>

Cannabis Regulations: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2018-144/>