

## **STRENGTH OF MIND CLINICS POLICY ON MEDICAL MARIJUANA**

It is the policy of Strength of Mind Clinics (SOM) that each of its providers (Therapists, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners) utilize to the best of their ability established clinical practice in the care of our patients. To this end, SOM encourages professional development, continuing education, and collaboration with other medical professionals. Abiding by evidence-based medicine is an important and necessary aspect of fulfilling such a mission.

***As there is currently no scientific evidence that marijuana is in any way beneficial for the treatment of any psychiatric disorder, SOM does not presently provide assessments for the granting of medical marijuana licenses to patients of our clinics.***

In contrast, current evidence does support, at a minimum, strong associations of cannabis use with the onset of psychiatric disorders, not the least of which are psychotic illnesses. Pre-adolescents and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to harm, given the negative and maladaptive effects of cannabis on neurological development. Therefore, it is also the policy of SOM to discourage its use in general.

***As it is a controlled substance, SOM policy does not allow the prescribing of other controlled substances concurrently with marijuana use – “medical” or otherwise. The clinical judgement of the individual provider will be used regarding the starting or continuing of non-controlled medications in the context of marijuana use (though the safer route is to taper and discontinue such medicines).***

SOM policy and practice surrounding cannabis or cannabis-derived substances will not be altered until sufficient clinical evidence emerges supporting such changes. If scientific evidence does emerge that supports the use of cannabis or cannabis-derived substances to treat specific conditions, the medication should be subject to the approval process of the FDA. Therefore, SOM policy may only change pending such FDA approval.

Regarding Oklahoma’s medical marijuana law, it is the philosophy of SOM that the use of marijuana for medical purposes – as in the use of any substance for medical purposes -- should be evidence-based and determined by professional standards of care. No such evidence or standards exist at this time.

As a caring word of warning to our patients at SOM, no medication approved by the FDA is smoked. Marijuana that is dispensed under state-authorized programs is not a specific product with controlled dosages or associated with evidence on the doses provided for the various disorders proponents claim it treats (and making these claims without evidence to support them). The buyer has no way of knowing the strength or purity of the product since cannabis lacks the quality control of FDA-approved medicines.

Further, users should be aware that the dosage administered by smoking is related to the depth and duration of the inhalation and therefore difficult if not impossible to standardize. The content and potency of various cannabinoids contained in marijuana also vary, making dose standardization a challenging task at best.

***SOM providers are fully aware of the paramount risks and liabilities of marijuana use. Therefore, SOM policy currently allows for neither the recommendation of recreational marijuana use nor for the official recommended licensure of the use of “medical” marijuana.***