

## Comprehensive Medical and Dental Program Authorization Guideline

**Subject: Medical Marijuana Guidelines**

**Unit: Health Services**

### Purpose

This guideline is used in the prior authorization and decision-making processes regarding requests for medical marijuana.

This guideline does not represent a standard of care, nor is it intended to dictate an exclusive course of management. Since medical research, physician practice patterns, and health care technology are continuously evolving, please note that the information contained in this guideline may be updated.

### Background

In 2010, the registered voters of Arizona passed a proposition permitting the use of medical marijuana for the relief of a debilitating medical condition if recommended by certain stipulated health care professionals (e.g., medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, naturopath). The legislation applies to all age groups including those under the age of 18. Thus, it is possible that medical marijuana could be prescribed for a CMDP member.

The AAP has concluded the following: “The American Academy of Pediatrics supports rigorous scientific research regarding the use of cannabinoids for the relief of symptoms **not currently ameliorated by existing legal drug formulations** [emphasis added].”

### Medical Marijuana is not an AHCCCS Covered Service

Under 42 CFR § 440.120 marijuana does not qualify as a federally reimbursable medication. AHCCCS does not currently cover and has never covered medical marijuana as a medical or pharmacy benefit. Marijuana is not a prescribed drug or medication. It is merely “recommended” and not dispensed through a pharmacy.

Because there is no peer reviewed literature to support its use in the pediatric population over other well studied, safer, and more efficacious drugs, it will not be covered by CMDP. Children or youth who come into care with medical marijuana cards will be immediately evaluated by a selected primary care provider and behavioral health provider with expertise in chronic pain disorders, substance abuse, and/or mental health expertise. As there is no physiologic withdrawal from marijuana, other appropriate therapeutic recommendations will be made.

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**References**

Legalization of Marijuana: Potential Impact on Youth, Committee on Substance Abuse and Committee on Adolescence, *Pediatrics* 2004; 113; 1825-1826 DOI: 10.1542/peds.113.6.1825

Legalization of Marijuana: Potential Impact on Youth, Alain Joffe, W. Samuel Yancy and the Committee on Substance Abuse and Committee on Adolescence, *Pediatrics* 2004;113;e632-e638

AHCCCS Medical Policy Manual Section 320-M

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*Signature on file*  
Medical Director

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Date