



Office of Cannabis Management

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Dear Colleagues:

As the medical and regulatory landscape surrounding cannabis continues to evolve, healthcare professionals have a critical opportunity—and responsibility—to lead the conversation with science, compassion, and clinical integrity.

I'm Dr. June Chin, a physician with over two decades of experience in integrative care and health equity, now serving as the Chief Medical Officer for the New York State Office of Cannabis Management (OCM). During my time in practice, I've treated patients with conditions that rarely respond to conventional therapies: chronic pain, anxiety, epilepsy, endometriosis, and more. Many of these individuals turned to cannabis not as a first-line option, but as a last resort—after pharmaceuticals fell short and invasive interventions failed to provide relief.

The results, in many cases, were undeniable. Patients regained mobility, found restful sleep, and restored quality of life. Yet I've also witnessed the potential harms that can arise when patients are left to navigate the complexities of cannabis on their own: inconsistent products, inadequate guidance, lingering stigma, and a healthcare system still catching up with the science.

This clinical guidance marks a pivotal moment: we now have both the clinical insight and the regulatory framework to bring medical cannabis out of the shadows and into the clinical mainstream. But to do so, we must continue to collectively shift how we practice, educate, and communicate.

Medical cannabis is not a cure-all, but it is a powerful tool—particularly when used as part of a comprehensive treatment plan. It is already proving beneficial in the management of chronic pain, PTSD, chemotherapy-induced nausea, seizure disorders, and other complex conditions.

Yet, despite growing evidence and increased patient interest, many clinicians remain uncertain about how to guide their patients. As cannabis becomes more visible and accessible, our role as providers has never been more vital. Patients are asking questions. They deserve answers grounded in science—not silence, stigma, or speculation.

A Call for Clinical Engagement

At OCM, we are committed to building a health-forward, equity-first model for cannabis regulation. But policy alone is not enough. We need the clinical community to stand with OCM and to lead with knowledge and compassion. We urge healthcare professionals across New York State to:

- Educate themselves on the endocannabinoid system and the effects of cannabis on the human body.
- Foster open non-judgmental conversation with patients about cannabis use to build trust and ensure accurate disclosure.

- Integrate cannabis into routine patient assessments—without judgment. This includes adolescents, older adults, those with complex comorbidities, and individuals with histories of substance use.
- Provide evidence-based harm reduction guidance to patients who use or are considering using cannabis including information on dosing delivery methods and potential drug interactions. The phrase “start low and go slow” is more than a catchphrase—it’s critical to patient safety.
- Recognize and report adverse events related to cannabis use accurately and promptly. Surveillance strengthens our public health response. Use the [OCM Incident Reporting Form](#) to help us track trends and inform future policy.
- Advocate for cannabis education in medical and nursing schools, residency training, and continuing education platforms.
- Stay informed on the latest clinical research and regulatory developments surrounding both medical and adult use cannabis.
- Refer patients interested in medical cannabis to <https://cannabis.ny.gov/patients> to learn more information about participating in the program.
- Consider becoming a certifying practitioner in the New York State Medical Cannabis Program. For additional information on how to participate, please visit: <https://cannabis.ny.gov/practitioners>.

Meeting the Moment with Science and Empathy

This is a transformative moment in public health. The end of cannabis prohibition is not the end of our work—it is the beginning of a more honest, evidence-driven approach to care. Legalization has lifted barriers, allowing more people to seek care openly. Healthcare providers are the most trusted voices in their communities. Your leadership is essential in ensuring that cannabis is used safely, effectively, and equitably.

At OCM, we are listening. We are learning. And we are building tools in partnership with clinicians like you. Your expertise is shaping our training programs, educational initiatives, and clinical guidance. Let us move forward—together—toward a future where cannabis is used not in isolation, but in alignment with patient-centered, evidence-based care. A future where science replaces stigma, and where every patient feels heard, safe, and supported.

Thank you for your commitment to healing. Let’s continue this work—on behalf of our patients, our communities, and the future of medicine.

With respect and solidarity,



Dr. Junella Chin, D.O.
Chief Medical Officer
New York State Office of Cannabis Management

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