

**Policy & Procedure Manual**

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**CANNABIS FOR MEDICAL PURPOSE – HR-XI-30**

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OPTIONS NORTHWEST is committed to protecting the health and safety of all people involved and/or affected by our activities, the communities in which we operate, and administrate. We recognize that the use of cannabis can adversely affect job performance, the environment, the safety of the individuals we support, our employees, and the general public.

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of OPTIONS NORTHWEST to provide reasonable workplace accommodation, short of undue hardship, for employees who are otherwise able to work and are not unfairly excluded from doing so because of a cannabis dependency, addiction, or problem.

OPTIONS NORTHWEST will respond in a timely, confidential, sensitive and reasonable manner to all requests for accommodations and supports in relation to any materials or information required to perform the essential duties of a position, as outlined in OPTIONS NORTHWEST's Workplace Accommodation Policy. Employees are responsible to request and complete an Applicant Workplace Accommodation Form to receive appropriate accommodation (HR-XI-27, Appendix A).

This policy applies to all current employees of OPTIONS NORTHWEST, including full and part-time, casual, contract, permanent, and temporary employees and employees on leave and who are able to return within a reasonable period of time and with reasonable accommodation.

**PURPOSE:**

To ensure all employee requests for accommodation surrounding medicinal cannabis are considered and approved when possible without causing undue hardship to the employer. This policy will also ensure OPTIONS NORTHWEST's compliance with relevant legislation including;

- The Ontario Human Rights Code
- Accessibility for Ontarian's with Disabilities Act (AODA) integrated accessibility standards.

Employees who are working may only use medical cannabis with appropriate documentation. To do so, they must inform their Supervisor/Manager/Director. An

employee does not have to disclose their specific diagnosis; however, they must provide a medical note from their physician or a medical practitioner and a copy of the appropriate documentation if accommodation is required. All information provided in regard to medical cannabis use is considered and will be kept confidential. Employees who have a medical condition which requires additional accommodation can discuss their cannabis use schedule in the context of OPTIONS NORTHWEST's current Workplace Accommodation Policy with proper documentation and possible discussion with their qualified health care practitioner.

**PROCEDURE:**

While in the course of their employment, employees will be made aware of this policy and shall always ensure to act in accordance with it.

**Using Medical Cannabis at Work:**

- If an employee takes medical cannabis during working hours, they shall do so only at the recommended dosage and frequency of the doses.
- OPTIONS NORTHWEST asks that where possible employees who require medical cannabis use a method of consumption other than smoking.
- Employees who choose to smoke medical cannabis must abide by all provincial smoking regulations.
- Employees who choose to smoke medical cannabis are not permitted to smoke in the presence of other employee or individuals supported by OPTIONS NORTHWEST.
- OPTIONS NORTHWEST will determine an appropriate smoking area for the employee, with the goal of maintaining the confidentiality of the employee's medical situation.

**Employee Expectations**

Employees are responsible to:

- Work with OPTIONS NORTHWEST to develop accommodation plans that are mutually agreeable.
- Follow the agreed-upon accommodation plan and be compliant with the guidelines outlined in this policy.
- Never share their medication with any other employee or the people that OPTIONS NORTHWEST supports, even those who may have a similar prescription or authorization.
- Maintain and actively communicate with management regarding the effects of cannabis on their ability to perform their job duties.
- Never participate in activities or events that could cause a safety risk, such as driving while under the influence of cannabis.

**Supervisor/Manager/Director Expectations**

Management Personnel are responsible to:

- Provide accommodation up to the point of undue hardship.

- Treat employees who use medical cannabis the same as all other employees using prescription medication.
- Be aware of the effects of cannabis use and ensure employees are not placed in safety-sensitive situations.
- Assess the effects of the use of cannabis and an employee's job performance.
- Ensure that medicinal cannabis use does not adversely affect the safety of the employee, their co-workers, and the people that OPTIONS NORTHWEST supports.
- Ensure that any employee that asks for help due to a cannabis dependency is provided with the appropriate support (including accommodation) and is not disciplined for doing so.
- Respond to any employee queries regarding the use of medical cannabis, while maintaining the privacy of an employee's specific situation at all times.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Where applicable, OPTIONS NORTHWEST may also take legal action in accordance with the law.

### **Cannabis and its Health Effects:**

You should not use cannabis if you have a predisposition to or family history of psychosis or problematic substance use.

Cannabis can be addictive. Close to 1 in 3 people who use cannabis will develop a problem with their use. Cannabis addiction can cause serious harm to you:

- health
- social life
- school work
- work and financial future

You should not use cannabis if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. It poses a risk to the fetus or new born child. Heavy cannabis use has been linked to lower birth weight (Government of Canada, 2019).

Information was taken from Government of Canada:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/campaigns/cannabis/canadians.html#a8>

### **Stigmatization and Cannabis**

OPTIONS NORTHWEST strongly believes and aims to provide a safe work environment for all employees, and a safe living environment for individuals we support. This includes an environment that is free from stigmatization, bullying, harassment, and differential treatment.

"The courts have confirmed that addictions to drugs or alcohol are protected by the Code. People with mental health disabilities and addictions face a high degree of stigmatization

and significant barriers. Stigmatization can foster a climate that exacerbates stress, and may trigger or worsen the person's condition. It may also mean that someone who has a problem and needs help may not seek it, for fear of being labelled" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2016).

Regardless of whether a disability is evident or non-evident, a great deal of discrimination faced by people with disabilities is underpinned by social constructs of "normality" which in turn tend to reinforce obstacles to integration rather than encourage ways to ensure full participation. In addition, the recreational use of cannabis for employees (based upon the previously listed restrictions under Expectations and Responsibilities) will neither be encouraged or reprimanded, but all employees will remain free from stigmatization. OPTIONS NORTHWEST will enforce an equal opportunity workforce that allows full participation for all employees.

**RECOMMENDED BY:** Administration

**APPENDICES:** 0

**OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY:** Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Community Service Administration, Community Services (all)

**ORIGINAL POLICY DATE:** June 2019

**AUTHORIZED BY:** Executive Director

**SIGNATURE:**

