
NH Therapeutic Cannabis Medical Oversight Board

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Why We Are Recommending the Removal of Glaucoma as a Qualifying Condition for Therapeutic Cannabis

The Therapeutic Cannabis Medical Oversight Board (TCMOB) is recommending that glaucoma be removed from the list of conditions that qualify a patient for the therapeutic cannabis program. This was not an easy decision, and we want to be clear about why we are making it. Simply put: medicine has changed, and much better treatments for glaucoma now exist. Keeping glaucoma on the list would mean recommending a treatment that doctors no longer support for this condition.

What Is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is an eye disease that damages the optic nerve, which connects your eye to your brain. It is usually caused by too much pressure building up inside the eye. If left untreated, it can lead to vision loss or blindness. The goal of treatment is to lower that pressure and keep it under control every day.

Why Are We Recommending This Change?

There are five clear reasons for this recommendation:

- **Doctors agree cannabis does not work well for glaucoma.** Every major eye doctor organization in the country — including the American Academy of Ophthalmology — advises against using cannabis to treat glaucoma. This is the current medical standard, and we take that guidance seriously.
- **Better treatments already exist.** Today, patients have access to several FDA-approved eye drops, medications, and laser procedures that safely and effectively lower eye pressure. These options work better, last longer, and have been tested in large clinical studies.
- **Cannabis wears off too quickly.** Cannabis can lower eye pressure, but only for about three to four hours at a time. Glaucoma requires around-the-clock pressure control, every single day. To use cannabis as a glaucoma treatment, a patient would need to use it six or more times a day — which is not realistic or healthy.
- **There is no proof cannabis protects vision.** No clinical study has ever shown that cannabis prevents vision loss or slows glaucoma from getting worse. Without that evidence, we cannot in good conscience recommend it as a treatment for a disease where protecting your eyesight is the entire goal.
- **The original research is outdated.** The studies that first linked cannabis to glaucoma were done in the 1970s. Medical science has advanced significantly

since then. Keeping glaucoma on the qualifying list would mean relying on decades-old research while ignoring the much stronger evidence we have today.

What Does This Mean for Current Patients?

If you are currently in the therapeutic cannabis program because of glaucoma, please speak with your healthcare provider. You may still qualify for the program under a different approved condition. For example, if you experience chronic pain, trouble sleeping, anxiety, or other ongoing symptoms, your provider can review whether those conditions qualify you to continue.

Removing glaucoma from the list does not mean your symptoms do not matter. It means we want to make sure you are receiving the most effective care available for your eyes — and that therapeutic cannabis is reserved for conditions where it genuinely helps.

Our Commitment to You

This recommendation reflects TCMOB's commitment to aligning qualifying conditions for therapeutic cannabis with current medical evidence, ensuring the program recommends conditions for which therapeutic cannabis remains an appropriate treatment option. We remain dedicated to supporting access to therapeutic cannabis and will continue to review qualifying conditions as science and standards of care evolve.