

Authorizing Cannabis for Medical Purposes

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy11514>

POLICY TYPE	Policy document
LAST REVIEWED	2020-02-29
DATE	2015-02-28
TOPICS	Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents

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Authorizing Cannabis for Medical Purposes

The legislation of cannabis for recreational purposes came into effect with the Cannabis Act in October 2018, and patients continue to have access to cannabis for therapeutic purposes. The Cannabis Regulations have replaced the Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations. Patients can obtain cannabis for medical purposes when a physician or nurse practitioner provides a "medical document", authorizing its use, and determining the daily dried cannabis dose in grams.

With the authorization, patients have the choice whether to (a) buy directly from a federally licensed producer, (b) register with Health Canada to produce a limited amount for personal consumption, (c) designate someone to produce it for them, or (d) buy cannabis at provincial or territorial authorized retail outlets or online sales platforms, if above the legal age limit.

While acknowledging the unique requirements of patients suffering from a terminal illness or chronic disease for which conventional therapies have not been effective and for whom cannabis may provide relief, physicians remain concerned about the serious lack of clinical research, guidance and regulatory oversight for cannabis as a medical treatment. There is insufficient clinical information on safety and efficacy for most therapeutic claims. There is little information on oral therapeutic and food dosages and knowledge on interactions with medications. Besides the need for appropriate research, health practitioners would benefit from unbiased, accredited educational modules and decision support tools based on the best available evidence.

The Canadian Medical Association has consistently expressed concern with the role of gatekeeper that physicians have been called to take as a result of court decisions. Physicians should not feel obligated to authorize cannabis for medical purposes.

Physicians who choose to authorize cannabis for their patients must comply with their provincial or territorial regulatory Colleges' relevant guideline or policy. They should also be familiar with regulations and guidance, particularly:

- Health Canada's Information for Health Care Practitioners – Medical Use of Cannabis (Interim): Summary and Quick Start Sheet¹
- the Canadian Medical Protective Association's guidance²
- the College of Family Physicians of Canada's preliminary guidance Authorizing Dried Cannabis for Chronic Pain or Anxiety³ and
- the 5-year⁴ guideline for prescribing medical cannabis in its primary care, published in the Canadian Family Physician⁵

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Bill C-2 An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (Respect for Communities Act)

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy11297>

POLICY TYPE Parliamentary submission
DATE 2014-10-28
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents



Bill C-2 An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (Respect for Communities Act)

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy11519>

POLICY TYPE Parliamentary submission
DATE 2015-05-14
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents



Bill C-17 An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy11196>

POLICY TYPE Parliamentary submission
DATE 2014-06-11
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents

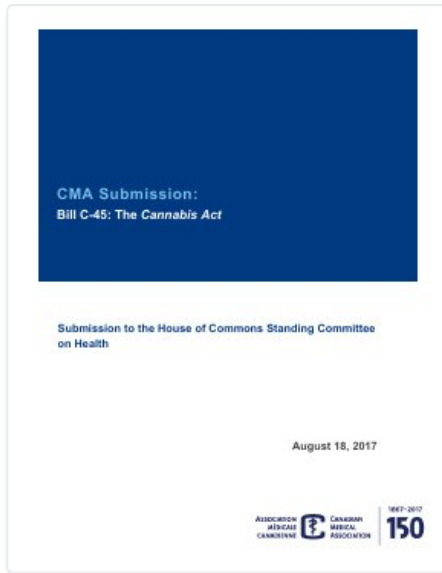


Bill C-45: The Cannabis Act

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy13723>

POLICY TYPE	Parliamentary submission
DATE	2017-08-18
TOPICS	Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents

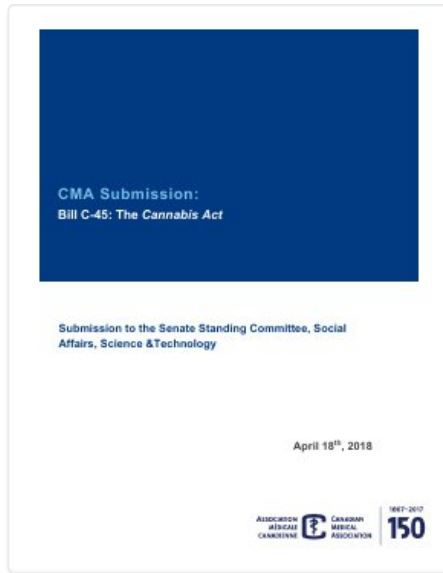


Bill C-45: The Cannabis Act

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy13861>

POLICY TYPE Parliamentary submission
DATE 2018-04-18
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents



Canada's lower-risk cannabis use guidelines (LRCUG)

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy13726>

POLICY TYPE Policy endorsement
DATE 2017-05-26
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents



Canadian Medical Association submission to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce: Higher rate now: Why excise tax on tobacco is long overdue for an increase

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy11129>

POLICY TYPE	Parliamentary submission
DATE	2014-05-15
TOPICS	Health care and patient safety Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents

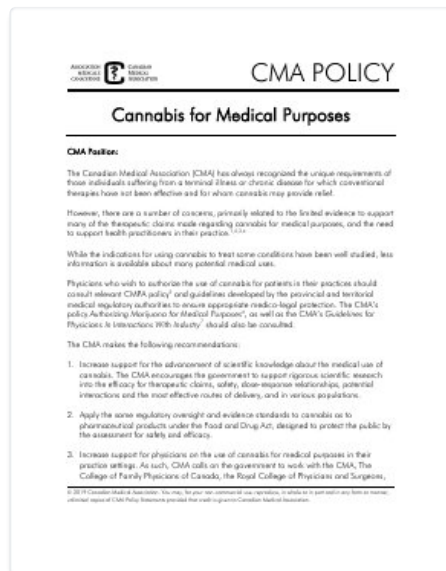


Cannabis for Medical Purposes

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy10045>

POLICY TYPE	Policy document
LAST REVIEWED	2019-03-03
DATE	2010-12-04
TOPICS	Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents

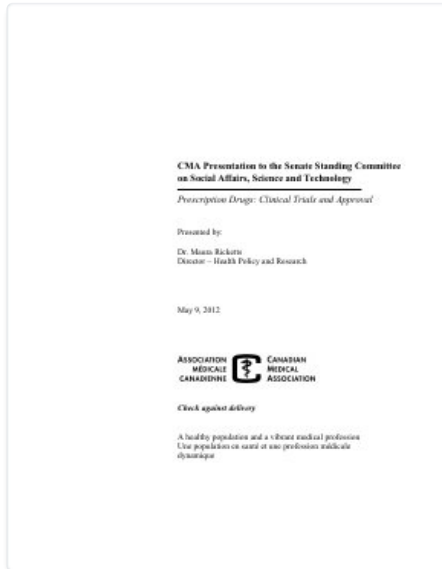


CMA Presentation to the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology – Prescription Drugs: Clinical Trials and Approval

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy10437>

POLICY TYPE Parliamentary submission
DATE 2012-05-09
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents

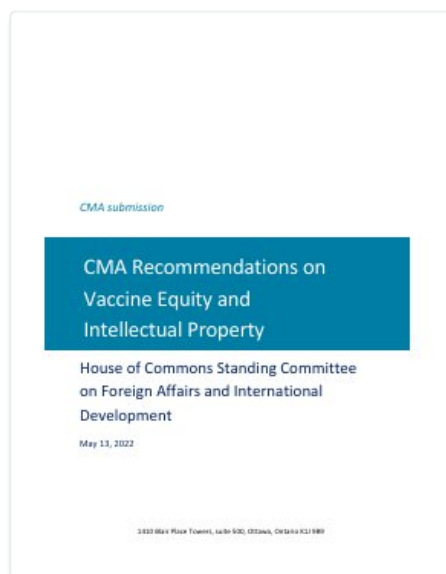


CMA Recommendations on Vaccine Equity and Intellectual Property

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy14476>

POLICY TYPE	Parliamentary submission
DATE	2022-05-13
TOPICS	Ethics and medical professionalism Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs Population health, health equity, public health

Documents

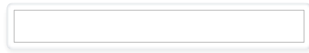
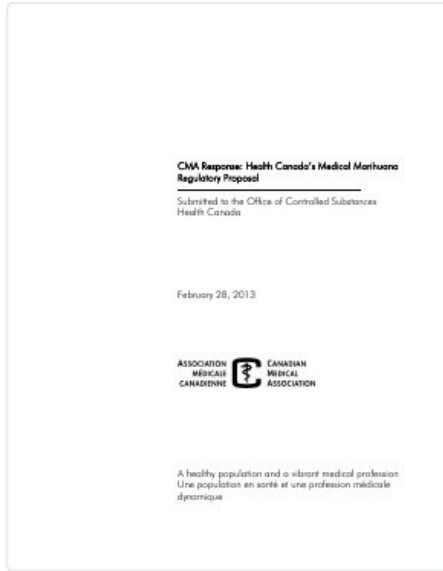


CMA Response: Health Canada's Medical Marijuana Regulatory Proposal

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy10702>

POLICY TYPE Parliamentary submission
DATE 2013-02-28
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents



CMA response to patented medicines regulations consultations

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy13690>

POLICY TYPE Response to consultation
DATE 2017-06-28
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents



CMA's Recommendations for Bill S-5: An Act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy13641>

POLICY TYPE	Parliamentary submission
DATE	2017-04-07
TOPICS	Health care and patient safety Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents

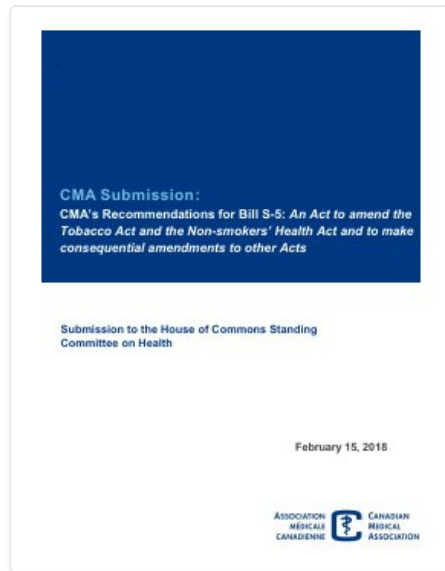


CMA's Recommendations for Bill S-5 An Act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy13918>

POLICY TYPE	Parliamentary submission
DATE	2018-02-15
TOPICS	Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs Health care and patient safety

Documents



CMA's Response to Health Canada's Public Consultation Guide to New Authorities in reference to Bill C-17, Protecting Canadians from Unsafe Drugs Act (Vanessa's Law)

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy11599>

POLICY TYPE Response to consultation
DATE 2015-06-08
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents

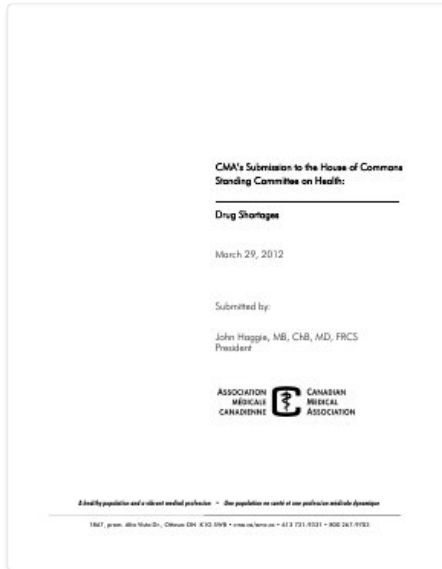


CMA's Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health: Drug Shortages

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy10382>

POLICY TYPE Parliamentary submission
DATE 2012-03-29
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents



CMA's Submission to the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology – Prescription Pharmaceuticals in Canada: The Post-Approval Monitoring of Prescription Pharmaceuticals

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy10631>

POLICY TYPE Parliamentary submission
DATE 2012-10-24
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents



CMA submission to the study of Bill C-37

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy13617>

POLICY TYPE Parliamentary submission
DATE 2017-04-06
TOPICS Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Documents

