

Pain Patients Wait in Line to Buy Medical Marijuana in Ohio for the First Time

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Patients struggling with pain waited in line to be among the first people in history to legally purchase medical marijuana in the state of Ohio.

"I'm feeling ecstatic," said Joan Caleodis, 55, who suffers from multiple sclerosis. She paid \$150 for three containers, each holding 2.83 grams of dried cannabis flowers, at the CY + Dispensary in the town of Wintersville. "The patients no longer have to wait for relief. We can get rid of this opioid issue we have in this country."

Caleodis said she felt even better when she got home and tried out the medical marijuana. "I was curious and I am very happy with the quality," she told reporters. "Some days are worse than others, but I am pretty much in constant pain and right now I am not."

As a former state worker who went on disability after 27 years on the job, Caleodis said she was prescribed opioids for pain after she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis more than eight years ago.

"I found myself taking double the amount prescribed and told myself, 'I'm not going that route,'" she said. "This is definitely better."

Medical Marijuana and the Opioid Crisis go hand in hand. Despite being available in Ohio, it is still unclear whether or not medical marijuana will have a significant impact on the current opioid crisis. More and more people are dying from an opioid-related overdose, and experts are hoping medical marijuana will reduce people's exposure to harmful opioids. If a loved one is addicted to drugs, then seek help.

Despite the benefits of opioids in terms of pain management, there is no denying the fact that they are habit-forming and quite risky. Patients who misuse their prescription, even accidentally, may suffer from adverse health effects. Recreational use of opioids can lead to addiction, tolerance, and dependence.

And right now, Ohio is one of the top five states with the highest rates for opioid-related overdose deaths. This is according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

These dispensaries of medical marijuana are regulated in Ohio by the state Board of Pharmacy.

Ohio will have to wait and see just how impactful medical marijuana will be in terms of combating the opioid crisis. But there is good news on the horizon: while the epidemic was sparked by prescription opioid abuse, the most recent death data suggests that this is quickly becoming less of a problem.

Recently, overdose deaths are now because of cocaine and meth mixed with Fentanyl.

There's some suggestive evidence that marijuana may help to reduce opioid use, Dr. Caleb Alexander, co-founder of the Center for Drug Safety and Effectiveness at the Bloomberg School posted. There's also some evidence to the contrary.

Meanwhile, Rosalie Liccardo Pacula, co-director of the Drug Policy Research Center at the RAND Corporation agreed that she was in favor of expanding medical marijuana programs. However, Pacula added, I do not believe that doing so will substantially impact the opioid epidemic.

Most people substituting cannabis for opioids are not using either drug medicinally, she wrote. Moreover, research does not suggest that cannabis is a substitute for heroin or fentanyl, the major drivers of the epidemic today.

Ohio's medical marijuana law passed in 2016 and was signed into law by then Gov. John Kasich. It authorizes the use of cannabis for patients with any of 21 specific conditions. The law also requires all potential medical marijuana patients to register with the state Board of Pharmacy.

In addition, patients have to get a recommendation from a physician. However, doctors still cannot prescribe marijuana because the federal government continues to classify it as a Schedule I drug.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid addiction, look for a drug treatment facility nearby and learn more about the process of rehabilitation. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in treating the physical and emotional effects of addiction. But since addiction affects everyone differently, a comprehensive treatment program that specifically caters to the patient's condition may be necessary. Get started on the road to recovery today. Click for a drug rehab center in Columbus.

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