



# **Scope and Standards of Practice for Cannabis Nurses**

**American Cannabis Nurses Association**

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Disclaimer: Nurses must be aware that cannabis and most cannabinoids are federally illegal. They must also be knowledgeable about their state's delineated scope of nursing practice and consider the legal status of cannabis in the given state where the practice occurs. The American Cannabis Nurses Association (ACNA) is not responsible for an individual nurse's interpretation or misuse of the document.

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## Introduction

This document is intended to define and articulate the scope and standards of practice of the emerging role of the cannabis nurse in the United States. The scope of any specialized nursing practice describes the who, what, where, when, how, and why of that specific nursing specialty practice (American Nurses Association [ANA], 2015a), while encompassing the nursing process and professional performance requirements of nurses. The standards of any specialty area of nursing are built upon the foundation of standards of practice expected of all registered nurses (Mariano, 2015) and cannabis nursing is no exception to this rule.

The American Cannabis Nurses Association (ACNA) has developed the scope and standards of practice for the registered nurse and advanced practice nurse who intends to incorporate cannabis therapeutics into their nursing practice. Discovery of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) has led to an emerging field of scientific research about cannabis. Registered nurses and advanced practice nurses have begun to see an increase in healthcare consumer use of cannabis at a rate that is outpacing nurses' knowledge and acceptance of cannabis as a medicine. Healthcare consumers are currently obtaining their information and medical guidance from untrained, non-medical professionals. Advice on how to use medical cannabis in conjunction or in lieu of other treatment modalities is often provided by retail workers in the dispensary model. Recognizing the importance of registered nurses' and advanced practice nurses' role in protecting healthcare consumers, the ACNA proposes that the nurse involved with medical cannabis develop and demonstrate the requisite knowledge and skills that display competency in this field.

## Definitions

**Advance Practice Registered Nurse:** For the purposes of this document, an advance practice nurse (APRN) is defined as a registered nurse who has successfully completed an accredited graduate-level education program in one of the four recognized specialty areas, has passed a national certification exam and obtained licensure to practice, has acquired advanced clinical knowledge and skills, and whose practice builds upon the acquisition of RN competencies. Furthermore, they have advanced education that prepares them to assume responsibility and accountability for health promotion/maintenance, inclusive of assessment and diagnosis of patient health issues, with the ability to prescribe pharmacological and non-pharmacological health interventions (ANA, 2015). The ANA (2015) recognizes the following four APRN roles: Certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA), certified nurse midwife (CNM), clinical nurse specialist (CNS), and certified nurse practitioner (CNP).

**Cannabinoid(s)**: Any of various naturally-occurring, biologically active, chemical constituents (such as cannabidiol or cannabinol) of hemp or cannabis including some (such as THC) that possess psychoactive properties (Merriam Webster Medical Dictionary, 2017a). Cannabinoids include chemical constituents derived from the cannabis plant (phytocannabinoids), endogenously created in the human body (endocannabinoids), or synthetically created in a controlled setting (i.e., dronabinol) (Grotenhermen & Russo, 2008).

**Cannabis**: The preferred designation of the flowering herbal plant species *Cannabis sativa* L., belonging to the genus *Cannabis* L., which belongs to the Cannabaceae family (United States Department of Agriculture, n.d.). Also commonly known as “marijuana.”

**Environment**: The surrounding milieu, habitat, conditions, and context in which beings participate and interact, inclusive of the external physical space and habitat, as well as the cultural, psychological, social, and historical influences. Additionally, the individual’s internal physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual experiences are aspects of the environment (ANA, 2015a).

**Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)**: The use of the best well-designed and valid research evidence, integrative-healing philosophies, personal experience, clinical expertise, and patient preferences to guide one’s nursing decision-making processes and practices (ANA, 2015a; Mariano, 2015). Use of EBP leads to the nurse making the best clinical decisions and the resultant positive healthcare outcomes (ANA, 2015a).

**Healing**: The act or process of restoring health or curing; the process of becoming well; tending to heal or cure (Merriam Webster Medical Dictionary, 2017b). Healing involves the physical, mental, spiritual, and social processes that support recovery, repair, renewal, and transformation of the self toward integration, balance, wholeness, and coherence (Mariano, 2015).

**Health**: An experience defined in terms of the continuum between wellness and illness in the presence or absence of disease or illness (ANA, 2015a); an individually defined state in which the person experiences well-being, harmony, and unity (Mariano, 2015).

**Health or Wellness-Illness Continuum**: The absence or presence of illness or disease does not adequately define health or wellness. Rather, individuals can move along a continuum toward greater wellness and health status as they pass through the stages of awareness, education, and growth (Travis & Ryan, 2004).

**Homeostasis:** The maintenance of relatively stable internal physiological conditions and processes in response to fluctuating internal and environmental conditions (Merriam Webster Medical Dictionary, 2017c).

**Human Caring:** The guiding moral idea of nursing; human attempt to connect with others in order to protect, enhance, and preserve human dignity and humanity with integrity as one supports a person toward finding meaning in illness, suffering, pain, and existence (ANA, 2015a; Watson, 2012).

**Nurse:** For the purposes of this document, nurse is defined as a registered nurse who has the educational background and experience to be licensed by a state or regulatory body to practice the art and science of nursing (ANA, 2015a). The terms “nurse,” “registered nurse,” and “professional nurse” are all used interchangeably within this document in alignment with this same definition.

**Medical Marijuana Program (MMP):** This refers to the individual state laws and guidelines that govern medicinal cannabis use.

**Patient:** The consumer of healthcare; this may be a person, family, community, or population who receives the nurse’s professional services (ANA, 2015a).

**Recommendation of Cannabis:** At the time of publication, cannabis cannot legally be prescribed due to the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency’s level I scheduling of cannabis. In many states, medicinal cannabis can be recommended by physicians or APRNs as per the medical marijuana program in any given state.

**Stakeholder:** Stakeholders are those entities that are integrally involved in the healthcare system. They include but are not limited to: patients, nurses, physicians, employers, insurance companies, pharmaceutical firms, government and regulating bodies, and, at the time of this writing, cannabis cultivators and cannabis medicine dispensaries.

**Terpenes/terpenoids:** Any of various isomeric hydrocarbons  $C_{10}H_{16}$  found present in essential oils (as from conifers) and used especially as solvents and in organic synthesis (Merriam Webster Medical Dictionary, 2017d). Terpenes make up the largest group of plant chemicals and cannabis contains over two hundred terpenes (Grotenhermen & Russo, 2008).

### **Overarching Philosophical Principles**

The cannabis nurse applies a guiding philosophy of caring for patients during patient-centered encounters. Cannabis nursing is both a learned skill and a practiced art, where

the cannabis nurse builds upon expertise from previous experiences with healing and nursing while enacting reflective practices to support growth toward expertise.

The cannabis nurse aims to not only support and educate patients but also to work toward supporting wellness and healing through a caring presence, which supports the patient's needs. Cannabis nursing requires that the nurse be educated in multiple areas above and beyond all registered nurse competencies, including knowledge of the endocannabinoid system, cannabis therapeutics, cannabinoids, terpenoids, cannabis laboratory testing requirements, potential medication interactions, advocacy, ethics, and the law. The cannabis nurse's role expands as he or she act as an advocate, coach, and navigator to guide patients through a sea of cannabis information and misinformation. The cannabis nurse is a leader in guiding patients toward a maximal state of homeostasis through the upregulation of the endocannabinoid system. The cannabis nurse practices self-care to maintain a professional and caring presence with patients.

### **Core Values**

Evidenced-based practice: Cannabis nurses remain up-to-date on the current and best scientific evidence regarding the use of cannabis to treat specific illness states or support wellness with patients or populations. Cannabis nurses will also identify low quality research and dispel misinformation when applicable.

Application of caring and justice-based ethics: The cannabis nurse is familiar with the ethical considerations related to nursing practice and he or she practices from a platform of ethics of care and justice-based ethics. Cannabis nurses recognize that patients and family members may face discrimination and ethical dilemmas and when warranted, the cannabis nurse will consider suggesting appropriate legal and ethical counsel.

Patient-centered care: The cannabis nurse recognizes that patients are at the center of their own care. The cannabis nurse supports patients in their autonomy and freedom to partner with others in determining their own plan of care. Cannabis medicine requires patient participation and the cannabis nurse may need to encourage patients to enhance their participation from time to time to maximize outcomes.

Interdisciplinary team work: The cannabis nurse is an integral member of the interdisciplinary team. The interdisciplinary team is characterized by a high degree of collaboration and communication among the health professionals caring for an individual that, together, develop a comprehensive treatment plan to address the biological,

psychological, and social needs of the patient. The cannabis nurse will inform other healthcare professionals about the specialty of cannabis nursing.

Holistic-based practice: The cannabis nurse considers patients' holistic needs (body, mind, spirit) when designing plans of care. The nurse is cognizant that in addition to supporting patient's use of cannabis for health and healing, the nurse is also obligated to promote the patient's knowledge of endocannabinoid system function and the ability to create and maintain homeostasis; therefore, evidence-based use of holistic-integrative modalities should be utilized as needed.

### **Standards of Care: Nursing Process Components**

The following section depicts the scope and standards of both the Registered Nurse (RN) and the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) roles when working with medicinal cannabis patients. It is noted that while some RNs have the knowledge, skills, and experiences to enact many aspects of the APRN role, the APRN has specific academic training in these areas as they have obtained at least a master's degree in nursing. APRNs also have specialized licensures, training, and knowledge that may allow for medical diagnosis and treatment regimens to be determined. APRNs generally have greater patient oversight and they may diagnose and treat illnesses and prescribe medications. In the case of cannabis nursing, the APRN may or may not have the ability to recommend patient use of cannabis depending on applicable Medical Marijuana Program state laws.

#### **Standard 1: Assessment**

The nurse collects relevant patient data related to the patient's healthcare needs and concerns.

#### **Competencies**

Throughout the ongoing assessment process, the cannabis nurse:

1. Collects assessment data that may include, but is not limited to, data regarding physiology of disease processes, medical interventions, spiritual/transpersonal, psychosocial, mental, emotional, sexual, age-developmental, economic, and cultural concerns. The collection of data is an ongoing process that is performed with compassion, caring, and respect for the dignity and uniqueness of each human's needs.
2. Works with the patient to determine their values, preferences, needs, and knowledge base related to health, wellness, illness, and cannabis use.

3. Establishes a trusting relationship that promotes and creates a caring atmosphere for the patient, family, and significant others.
4. Recognizes the impact of the nurse's own cannabis-related attitudes, values, knowledge, and beliefs on the assessment process.
5. Assesses the influence of the family/ support system dynamics related to the patient's own health and use of cannabis.
6. Prioritizes data collection based on patient's own health condition(s) and expressed concerns.
7. Utilizes evidence-based assessment techniques to identify patient health patterns.
8. Applies ethical, legal, and privacy guidelines and policies throughout the data collection process, inclusive of data maintenance, use, and dissemination. Considers federal cannabis (medical marijuana) laws as well as state-based Medical Marijuana Program (MMP) principles.
9. Honors patient preferences, while recognizing the patient's authority regarding their own health.
10. Gathers specific historical and current data regarding patient's knowledge of and experience with cannabis.
11. Documents data gathered in a secure HIPPA-compliant manner that protects patient privacy as per federal mandates.

**APRN Role:**

1. Uses advanced assessment skills during a review of systems to best potentiate the patient's journey toward endocannabinoid system health and wellness. Performs a complete clinical assessment to identify whether or not patient has a qualifying condition based on state Medical Marijuana Program (MMP) guidelines. Considers current and previous mental health and substance use history.
2. Initiates appropriate tests and diagnostics related to endocannabinoid system health status and patient-specific health concerns.
3. Reviews current treatment of qualifying conditions and responses to treatment. Reconciles medications.
4. Applies current requirements and principles of state MMP and considers current National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) recommendations. Considers if cannabis will be effective for the qualifying condition while considering the current state of evidence related to cannabis and the qualifying condition(s).

**Standard 2: Diagnosis**

The cannabis nurse analyzes assessment data to formulate appropriate potential and actual nursing diagnoses, problems, and/or issues related to health, wellness, disease, or illness and cannabis.

## **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Derives the nursing diagnoses based on the data gathered from and with the patient and other appropriate sources.
2. Identifies actual or potential risks to the patient's health, well-being, and safety.
3. Verifies the diagnoses, problems, and issues with the patient, family, group, community, and population.
4. Shares nursing diagnostic information with other interdisciplinary healthcare professional colleagues as needed.
5. Establishes goals with patients across the health continuum.
6. Works with the cannabis patient to prioritize goals around medicinal cannabis use while establishing a safe plan of care.
7. Considers the patient's holistic and other healing needs as related to the endocannabinoid system health and optimal functioning. Considers current state of evidence related to cannabis effectiveness and relative risks for the patient.
8. Documents nursing diagnoses, problems, and/or issues in manner so that outcomes can be evaluated.
9. Identifies the patient's medical diagnoses as qualifying medical conditions for cannabis recommendations as defined by state laws and MMP.

### **APRN Role:**

1. Formulates a differential diagnosis or diagnoses based on the assessment, history, physical examination, and diagnostic test findings and results.
2. Considers risks to specific vulnerable populations and the current body of scientific evidence related to qualifying cannabis recommendation considerations and effectiveness of cannabinoid medicines.

## **Standard 3: Outcomes Identification**

The cannabis nurse clearly identifies expected outcomes for an individualized plan related to the patient's or a population's unique situation while utilizing the nursing process.

## **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Works with the patient, family, and interdisciplinary healthcare team members to determine desired goals and outcomes. The patient remains at the center of the process.
2. Defines the outcomes as related to the patient's values, beliefs, age, preferences, while considering ethical concerns, spiritual practices and preferences, and environment.
3. Integrates the most relevant available cannabis science evidence and other related scientific evidence given the patient's or population's concerns.
4. Considers the best cannabis nurse practices.
5. Weighs the risks, benefits, and costs related to attaining the intended outcomes.
6. Generates a time frame for expected outcomes.
7. Modifies outcomes based on ongoing evaluation of the plan.
8. Documents expected outcomes and actual outcomes.
9. Promotes outcomes that incorporate the patient's values, culture, and ethical concerns regarding health and cannabis.

#### **APRN ROLE**

1. Ensures that expected outcomes and the patient-centered cannabinoid therapy plan are in alignment.
2. Supports the patient titration process plan as per National Council of States Board of Nursing (NCSBN).
3. Anticipates results from implementation of the personalized patient-centered plan, considering current evidence-based science, projected costs to patient and family, clinical effectiveness, and individual patient response.

#### **Standard 4: Planning**

The cannabis nurse develops a plan that outlines strategies to attain expected outcomes.

#### **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. In partnership with the patient, develops a plan that considers values, beliefs, spirituality, health practices, preferences, choices, age, cultural relevance, and environmental concerns.
2. In conjunction with the patient, family, and other clinicians and concerned persons, develops a plan for incorporation of appropriate use of cannabis therapeutics and modalities that support optimal functioning of the endocannabinoid system.
3. Builds upon the established trusting-caring relationship to explore alternative and integrative options for healing.

4. Includes evidence-based strategies to address established issues, diagnoses, and problems.
5. Develops an evidence-based plan for implementation.
6. Identifies costs and financial implications with patient, family, and significant others.
7. Modifies plan to address ongoing assessment and patient responses to cannabis use.
8. Provides health education, teaching, coaching, and health promotion as needed to support the patient's healthcare team.
9. Coordinates implementation of the plan.
10. Supports the NCSBN call for the patient to start low and go slow with the cannabis titration process through educational approaches.

**APRN Role:**

1. Creates an evidence-based plan in partnership with the patient and interdisciplinary team members.
2. Incorporates coaching techniques such as motivational interviewing, appreciative inquiry, and active listening with the patient in efforts to develop a patient-centered holistic plan.
3. Develops innovative strategies and utilizes patient-centered tools as part of the planning process to meet the needs of the cannabis patient.
4. Demonstrates leadership in the design and implementation of therapeutic interventions, considering all modalities that may support endocannabinoid system health.
5. While developing the plan of care, the APRN integrates assessment strategies, diagnostic strategies, and therapeutic interventions that reflect current cannabis evidence-based knowledge and practice.

**Standard 5: Implementation**

The cannabis nurse supports the patient in implementation of the plan of care.

**Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Partners with the patient, family, and significant others to implement the plan in a safe and timely manner in accordance with state laws and MMP.
2. Utilizes inter-professional resources to support patients' achievement of outcomes.
3. Provides an ongoing presence as implementation data are gathered.
4. Modifies cannabis-related nursing care plan based on ongoing assessment of effectiveness of implementation strategies.
5. Supports the patient with ongoing educational needs.

6. Provides coordination of care as needed to achieve cannabis-related outcomes.
7. Implements health teaching and health promotion strategies to support patients' ongoing educational needs related to wellness and possible adverse effects of cannabis care plan implementation.
8. Monitors the patient or population for adverse effects related to the use of cannabis or related to the implementation plan.
9. Engages cannabis patient alliance and advocacy groups in health teaching and health promotion activities.
10. Documents the implementation process.

**APRN Role:**

1. Supports patient implementation of evidence-based interventions stated in the personalized treatment plan.
2. Uses prescriptive authority with pharmaceuticals and recommendation privileges with cannabis and cannabinoid medicines in accordance with state laws and with awareness of federal laws. Follows state-based MMP guidelines for the cannabis recommendation process. Uses prescriptive authority for procedures, referrals, and treatments and therapies in accordance with state and federal law. Educates the patient about evidence-based cannabinoid agents and therapies in accordance with clinical indicators after reviewing results of diagnostic and laboratory tests.
3. Utilizes an integrative approach where cannabis medicine can be incorporated with lifestyle management, holistic modalities, traditional pharmaceutical medications, and herbal therapies-supplements in an appropriate and safe manner to support endocannabinoid system tone. Side effects, adverse effects, variable effects, and safety considerations are explored with the patient/family/caregiver as decisions about cannabis recommendation are made.
4. Provides ongoing clinical consultation regarding cannabis medicine, the titration process, and the endocannabinoid system.
5. Provides patient/ family members/ caregivers with relevant and accurate information and guidance on appropriate cannabis dosing, routes of administration, cannabinoid ratios, and terpenes/terpenoids as allowed by practice standards, state MMP mandates, and federal laws.
6. Monitors the patient for side effects, adverse effects, and cannabis use disorder.
7. Avoids conflicts of interest with the cannabis industry.
8. Provides clinical cannabis consultation for healthcare consumers and other professionals related to complex clinical cannabis cases in order to improve patient care and outcomes.

**Standard 6: Evaluation**

The cannabis nurse evaluates progress toward attaining outcomes.

**Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Evaluates the plan, implementation process, and outcomes achievement as prescribed by the indicated timeline.
2. In conjunction with the patient or population, evaluates the effectiveness of the planned strategies as related to unique patient or population responses in efforts to reach goals.
3. Uses ongoing assessment and evaluation data to revise the cannabis nursing plan of care, including diagnoses, outcomes, plans, and implementation strategies.
4. Documents findings and results of the evaluation process.
5. Monitors the patient for side effects, adverse effects, variable effects, and cannabis use disorder in alignment with state MMP requirements.

**APRN Role:**

1. Enacts a systematic evaluation process with the goal of enhancing a patient-centered cannabis plan of care effectiveness.
2. Considers results of evaluation when making recommended revisions to plan.
3. Remains patient-centered and utilizes interdisciplinary team members' insight as plan is revised.
4. Supports patient with recommendations for cannabinoid/terpenoid administration routes, doses, and ratios based on evaluation findings.
5. Follows up with patients regarding any changes in the body of scientific evidence related to cannabis and current qualifying condition(s).
6. Makes recommendations for policy, procedure, or protocol revisions based on the evaluation results and patient outcomes.

## Standards of Professional Performance

### Standard 7: Ethics

The cannabis nurse practices ethically.

#### Competencies

The cannabis nurse:

1. Utilizes the *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* (ANA, 2015b) to guide practice while establishing and maintaining an ethical environment of nursing care.
2. Practices cannabis nursing with compassion, caring, respect, and in acknowledgement of the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of all persons.
3. Advocates for patients', populations', and consumers' rights regarding informed decision making and self-determination in relation to cannabis as a medicine.
4. Understands that their primary commitment is to the patients and populations they serve.
5. Maintains therapeutic-caring relationships and professional boundaries.
6. Safeguards the cannabis patient's rights to healthcare privacy.
7. Maintains ongoing cannabis nursing competence through professional and personal educational and development opportunities.
8. Demonstrates ongoing commitment to self-reflection and self-care practices.
9. Collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights and reduce health disparities.
10. Enacts personal and nursing core values to maintain integrity of cannabis nursing practice.

#### **APRN Role:**

1. Acts as a leader in developing cannabis nursing-related policies, procedures, and practices that are evidence-based and ethically sound.
2. Practices cannabis nursing from a framework of caring ethics and social justice with a non-discriminatory, caring, and compassionate approach.
3. Participates with interprofessional teams as they address ethical risks, benefits, and outcomes related to cannabis healthcare industry practices.
4. Acts as an advocate to end social stigma related to cannabis use.

## **Standard 8: Culturally Congruent Practice**

The cannabis nurse practices in a manner that is congruent with cultural diversity and principles of inclusion.

### **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Participates in lifelong learning to ensure understanding of diverse patients' cultural preferences, worldviews, and choices and how these impact patients' decision-making processes.
2. Considers the effects and impacts of discrimination and oppression on cannabis nurse practice within vulnerable diverse populations. Provides care to all patients and populations in a non-discriminatory manner.
3. Advocates for cannabis policies that promote health and prevent harm among culturally diverse, underserved, vulnerable, or underrepresented patients and populations.
4. Promotes equal access to medicinal cannabis services.
5. Educates nurse colleagues and other healthcare professionals about the intersection between medicinal cannabis and diverse population needs.
6. Provides quality medical care to all patients and populations in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner.

### **APRN Role:**

1. Acts as a leader within interdisciplinary teams to identify and respond to the cultural needs of patients and communities.
2. Works with patients, communities, medical organizations, and lawmakers to create and maintain a focus on cross-cultural partnerships, both within the holistic cannabis medical practice and population at large.
3. Researches holistic and cannabis medicine interventions in order to improve quality of life and healthcare outcomes for culturally diverse cannabis patients.
4. Develops non-discriminatory recruitment and retention strategies to achieve a diverse and inclusive workforce in cannabis clinics and dispensaries.
5. Works closely with the patient to resolve discrepancies that may exist between cultural preferences and/or patient experiences versus evidence-based cannabis practice, includes the patient in the process of planning, recommending/certifying patients for medicinal cannabis use, and assessing outcomes.

## **Standard 9: Communication**

The cannabis nurse communicates effectively in all areas of practice.

### **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Assesses their own communication skills and communication effectiveness.
2. Demonstrates cultural empathy when communicating with the patient.
3. Uses communication methods that demonstrate caring, respect, deep listening, authenticity, and trust.
4. Maintains communication with interdisciplinary team as needed to ensure continuity of care.
5. Conveys accurate information regarding medicinal use of cannabis.
6. Discloses concerns related to potential or actual hazards or safety issues related to medicinal cannabis use.
7. Applies HIPPA-compliant, ethical, legal, and privacy guidelines and policies throughout the communication process, inclusive of information maintenance, use, and dissemination.

### **APRN Role:**

1. Utilizes nonviolent communication skills (NVC), focusing on needs and expectations when working with cannabis clients, discussing new legislation with lawmakers, and interfacing with colleagues.
2. Leads the charge for patient advocacy and communicates the need for change so that patients have adequate access to cannabis.
3. Guides conversations in a forward direction with a positive attitude to facilitate productive discussions and creative solutions in the evolving cannabis healthcare industry.
4. Acts as a leader by shaping cannabis environments and conversations that encourage healthy communication.

## **Standard 10: Collaboration**

The cannabis nurse collaborates with patients, families, clinicians, populations, and key stakeholders.

### **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Identifies areas of cannabis expertise and contributions of other professionals and key stakeholders.
2. Clearly articulates the cannabis nurse role with other healthcare team members.
3. Partners with the cannabis patient and key stakeholders to advocate for change that supports positive healthcare outcomes and enhanced quality of care.
4. Exhibits dignity, respect, and professionalism when interacting with others and giving and receiving feedback.
5. Shares cannabis knowledge with peers and colleagues in a professional manner.

### **APRN Role:**

1. Guides interprofessional activities, including endocannabinoid education, consultation, management, technological development, and research to enhance positive outcomes.
2. Establishes and maintains collaborative relationships amongst cannabis peers and those seeking cannabis knowledge in efforts to improve patient care.
3. Develops protocols and tools to assist cannabis interdisciplinary professionals as they create plans of care for the patient. Provides an open forum with other interdisciplinary cannabis professionals to collaborate in customizing these protocols to meet specific needs.

## **Standard 11: Leadership**

The cannabis nurse provides leadership within professional practice settings.

### **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Contributes to the evolution of professional medicinal cannabis nursing through participation in professional organizations, including but not limited to, ACNA.
2. Influences cannabis policy processes that promote health and ensure patient safety and well-being.
3. Mentors other cannabis nurses toward the advancement of cannabis nursing practice.

4. Acts as a professional role model for other nurses and healthcare professionals.

**APRN Role:**

1. Participates in and aligns with decision-making bodies to communicate knowledge and skills with a goal of increasing effectiveness of patient outcomes and advancing professional cannabis nursing practice.
2. Is an active member of interprofessional healthcare teams.
3. Educates policy makers, colleagues, and patients about advanced practice cannabis nursing and role development.
4. Provides guidance and counseling to colleagues regarding acquisition of clinical knowledge, skills, ways of knowing, and judgment about safe and effective use of cannabis medicine.
5. Promotes advanced cannabis nursing practice and supports APRNs in being able to practice within the full scope of, or at the top of, their license. Serves as a role model for other APRNs entering the cannabis nursing specialty.
6. Models expert cannabis nursing practice to colleagues, consumers, and interdisciplinary team members.
7. Advocates for the continuous improvement of systems that support the advancement and implementation of cannabis medicine.

**Standard 12: Education**

The cannabis nurse seeks knowledge and competence that reflect current cannabis nursing practices and promote futuristic and innovative thinking.

**Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Regularly participates in educational activities related to cannabis nursing and interprofessional knowledge bases.
2. Demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning inclusive of self-reflection and inquiry for personal and professional growth.
3. Acquires knowledge and skills related to the role of the cannabis nurse.
4. Shares educational findings, experiences, and ideas with peers.

**APRN Role:**

1. Uses current cannabis healthcare research findings and other evidence to expand knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment in order to enhance role performance.
2. Presents and disseminates cannabis science evidence to professional interprofessional colleagues, communities, and policy makers.
3. Educational endeavors incorporate the role of the endocannabinoid system in homeostasis and are inclusive of the integrative modalities that support endocannabinoid system health and self-regulation.

### **Standard 13: Evidence-Based Practice and Research**

The cannabis nurse integrates current best evidence and research findings into practice.

#### **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Articulates the importance and value of cannabis science-based research and its application to patients and populations.
2. Uses current evidence-based knowledge to guide cannabis nursing practice and decision-making processes.
3. Participates in the building of the body of cannabis-related scientific evidence and contributes to the emerging field of cannabis research and therapeutics science.
4. Promotes ethical practices and principles within cannabis research efforts.

#### **APRN Role:**

1. Integrates current cannabis science evidence in all practice settings to enhance quality of services provided.
2. Utilizes current cannabis science evidence to continuously develop knowledge, skills, abilities, role performance, and clinical judgment.
3. Uses critical thinking skills in order to integrate cannabis science evidence and holistic nursing theory to enhance patient-centered practices.
4. Contributes to the cannabis nursing knowledge base by conducting cannabinoid science research or synthesizing current cannabinoid science evidence to enhance patient outcomes.
5. Encourages other nurses to enhance and grow their research skills.
6. Performs rigorous critiques of cannabinoid science to create progressive evidence-based cannabis nursing practices and protocols.
7. Advocates for ethical cannabis science research and translational scholarship with consideration of research participants as protected healthcare consumers.
8. Supports a climate of collaborative interprofessional research and clinical inquiry.
9. Disseminates research findings through peer-reviewed journal publications, presentations, and consultations.

## **Standard 14: Quality of Practice**

The nurse contributes to quality cannabis nursing practices.

### **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Recommends strategies to improve quality of care for the cannabis patient.
2. Collects data to ensure quality of cannabis nursing practice.
3. Provides critical review of policies, procedures, and guidelines that impact the cannabis patient and nurses.
4. Documents cannabis nursing practice in a way that supports quality and performance improvement.
5. Incorporates evidence-based practice into care to improve quality of outcomes.

### **APRN Role:**

1. Examines trends in nursing quality data, especially as it relates to delivery of cannabis medicine. Explores cultural, ethnic, and population-based considerations when examining the quality data.
2. Designs innovative plans of care with cannabis medicine in accordance with state MMP requirements and in consideration of federal laws.
3. Provides leadership in the design and implementation of the protocols and processes which supports the safe delivery of cannabis medicine.
4. Contributes to cannabis nursing knowledge through the pursuit of scientific inquiry.
5. Utilizes scientific and qualitative data in the system-level decision-making.
6. Influences organizational systems that incorporate endocannabinoid medicine as they strive to improve outcomes.
7. Obtains and maintains professional or specialty certifications.

## **Standard 15: Professional Practice Evaluation**

The cannabis nurse evaluates their own, and other nurses', cannabis nursing practices.

### **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Regularly engages in self-reflection and self-evaluation of cannabis nurse practice.
2. Adheres to *The Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (ANA, 2015a) and *The Code of Ethics for Nurse with Interpretive Statements* (ANA, 2015b).
3. Seeks formal and informal evaluation and feedback from the cannabis patient, colleagues, and others.
4. Provides other cannabis nurses with formal and informal constructive feedback regarding their practice and role performance.

APRN Role:  
No differentiation.

### **Standard 16: Resource Utilization**

The cannabis nurse utilizes available resources to plan, provide, and sustain evidence-based nursing services.

#### **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Assists the cannabis patient in factoring costs, risks, and benefits in decisions about care.
2. Assists the patient in identifying and procuring traditional medical therapies, holistic services, and integrative medicinal technologies as appropriate to support their healing processes.
3. Integrates telehealth and mobile health technologies when appropriate to promote positive interactions with the cannabis patient.
4. Uses community resources to support and implement interprofessional plans and educational efforts.

APRN Role:

1. Considers holistic needs and conditions of the cannabis patient, potential for adverse effects, stability of patient's condition, complexity of the treatment protocol, and difference in personal preferences and responses to initiation of cannabis treatment when creating holistic treatment plans.
2. Creates innovative strategies and solutions in order to effectively manage use of cannabis medicine resources, while continuously improving quality of care.
3. Explores and promotes cost-effectiveness, cost benefits, and strategies for increasing efficiency associated with cannabis nursing practice.
4. Connects the cannabis patient with local cannabis resources, including supportive programs, cannabis educational opportunities, and informational materials.
5. Initiates and leads change in cannabis nursing theory, research, education, and practice by assuming advanced leadership roles.
6. Utilizes organizational and community cannabis resources when creating holistic interdisciplinary treatment plans.

## **Standard 17: Environmental Health**

The cannabis nurse supports an environmentally healthy and safe atmosphere.

### **Competencies**

The cannabis nurse:

1. Creates a safe and healthy workplace environment.
2. Reduces environmental health risks to self, the cannabis patient, and colleagues.
3. Uses products or treatments consistent with evidence-based practices to decrease environmental threats.

### **APRN Role:**

1. Analyzes the impact of social, political, environmental, and economic influences on cannabis plant-based medicine and pharmaceutical production of cannabinoid medicines.
2. Creates partnerships that promote environmentally sound and sustainable cannabis plant production.

## **Summary**

The cannabis nurse works in a variety of settings with the patient and his or her support systems to facilitate health, healing, and well-being through both the patient's safe and effective use of cannabis and/or cannabinoid medicines and through the upregulation of the endocannabinoid system toward optimal functioning. The cannabis nurse is educated on the use of cannabis as medicine and current cannabis scientific findings, therefore, the cannabis nurse is able to educate and coach the patient, his or her caregivers or support systems, and other healthcare providers about the most effective and safe uses of cannabis for specific health, healing, and illness concerns. The cannabis nurse upholds the highest ethical standards and advocates for patients and populations.

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