

# The WV Marijuana Problem

ECHO 2018



# Common Patient Presentation

- It is common for patients to say “I don’t really see weed as a drug”
- Patients often say “Pot is not addictive”
- “I can’t sleep with out smoking at night”
- Pregnant patients may say their physical told them they should smoke to help with morning sickness (and they might be telling the truth!)

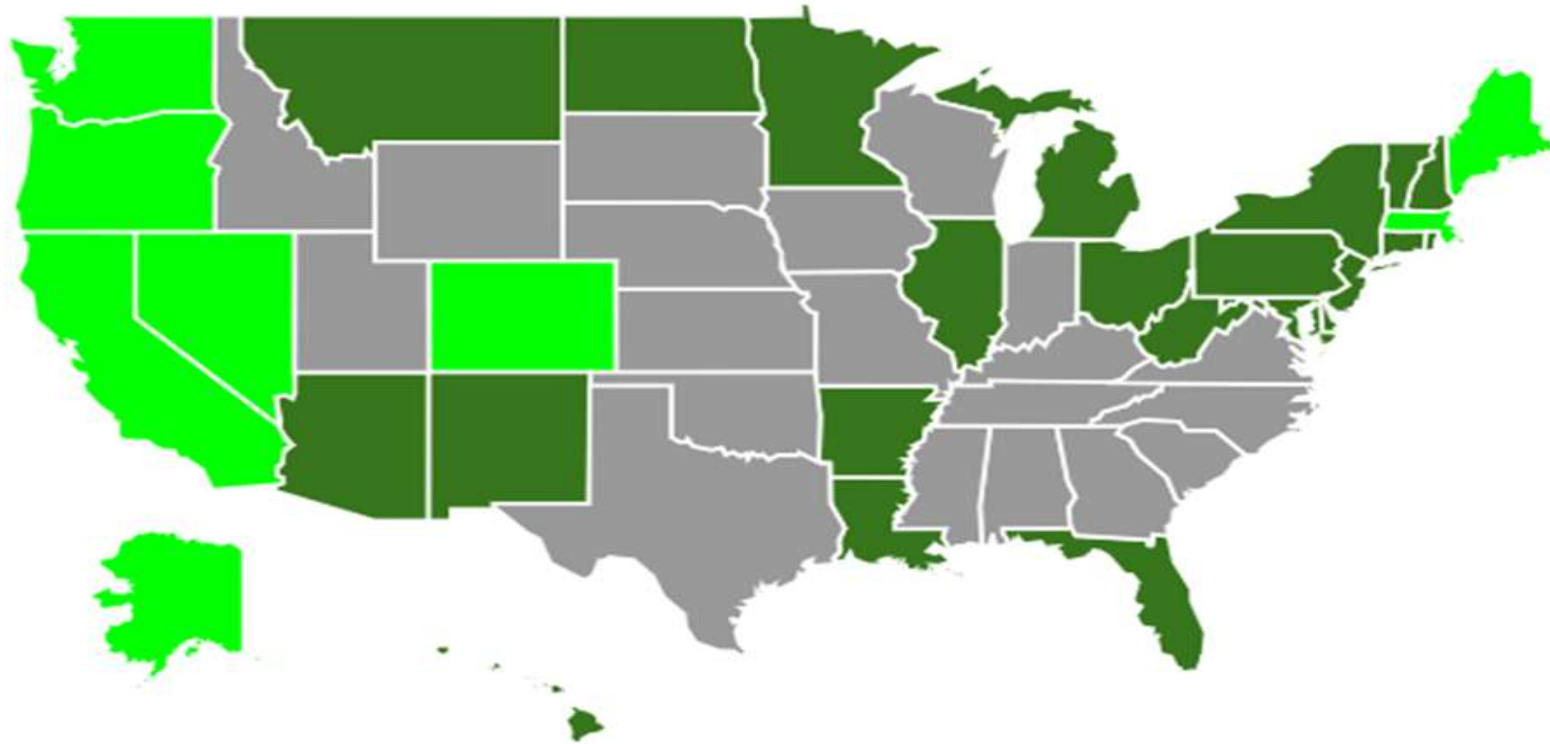
# Helpful Responses to Patient Presentations

- Don't argue, educate:
  - Marijuana is a mind and mood altering drug and is considered by the federal government as a Schedule I drug meaning it has the greatest potential for abuse and with no medicinal value. While this is being challenged by many, that is the current federal law
  - Marijuana is addictive. The most common withdrawal symptoms that patients report when they stop using is insomnia, irritability and decreased appetite
  - Difficulty sleeping is a common withdrawal symptom when marijuana use is discontinued

# Helpful Responses to Patient Presentations

- Cannabis use in pregnancy is associated with the following poor fetal outcomes
  - Low birth weight
  - Still births – 2.3x greater risk
  - Smaller head circumference
  - Poor cognitive functioning
  - Hyperactivity

# 2018 – states with current laws legalizing marijuana



# Legalization and Response

- A common argument from patients is that - it will be legal soon so it shouldn't be that big a deal
- Even if marijuana were today it is still considered a mind and mood altering drug (like alcohol which is legal) and use would be prohibited in COAT clinic

# Legalization in WV – the facts

- April 19, 2017 WV became the 29<sup>th</sup> state to pass a medical marijuana law
- Conditions for which it is approved to treat
  - terminal illness
  - Cancer
  - HIV/AIDS
  - ALS
  - Parkinson's disease
  - Multiple sclerosis, spinal cord damage, epilepsy, neuropathies, Huntington's disease, Crohn's disease, intractable seizures, sickle cell anemia
  - PTSD
  - “severe chronic or intractable pain in which conventional therapeutic intervention and opiate therapy is contraindicated or has proved ineffective as determined as part of continuing care.”

# Legalization in WV – the facts

- Limitations

- Patients must be certified as meeting criteria by a registered physician

- Amount

- Patients may only obtain a 30-day supply of cannabis at a time
    - Home cultivation is not allowed

- Form

- pills, oils, gels, creams, ointments, tinctures, liquid, and non-whole plant forms for administration through vaporization
    - Dispensaries cannot sell edibles, but medical cannabis products could be mixed into food or drinks by patients themselves
    - Vaporization (or oils) is allowed, but smoking is prohibited