



# Americans for Safe Access

Advancing Legal Medical Cannabis Therapeutics

## ABOUT ASA

**Founded in 2002, Americans for Safe Access (ASA)** is the largest national organization of patients, medical professionals, scientists, providers, and concerned citizens promoting safe and legal access to cannabis for therapeutic use and research. ASA has utilized a variety of tactics, including legislation, education, litigation, research, grassroots empowerment, advocacy, and services for medical cannabis stakeholders to meet the immediate needs of patients and consumers while clearing the way for a national medical cannabis program.

ASA offers a platform for medical cannabis, wellness, and healthcare stakeholders to engage in projects and programs that address knowledge, policy, and regulatory gaps to improve access to medical cannabis. Our work is guided by a shared vision of a national framework that closes the divide between wellness and medicine by fostering the integration of cannabis into patient care as a frontline treatment option by creating pathways to insurance coverage, investing in the development of standardized cannabis-based products, ensuring a safe and consistent supply, and eliminating employment, housing, parental, and healthcare discrimination.



## VISION

Our vision is a world where cannabis is universally recognized as a legal and viable medicine, free from stigma or discrimination. We aim to empower patients and their caregivers with the knowledge to make informed medical decisions and ensure that medical professionals can prescribe cannabis as a frontline or adjunct therapy. We strive for a future where patients enjoy equal rights and freedoms, have access to a wide range of personalized cannabis treatments, trust the safety and labeling of their products, and where medical cannabis is covered by insurance, ensuring that everyone can afford the care they need.

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*The Patient's Bill of Rights*

1. Access to Treatment Options
2. Respect & Nondiscrimination
3. Confidentiality of Health Information
4. Quality
5. Product information
6. Accuracy
7. Information Disclosure
8. Safety
9. Input without Retribution
10. Fair Price



*Americans for Safe Access*




## ASA'S IMPACT

Over the last two decades, ASA has empowered patient advocates and medical cannabis stakeholders to participate in a strategic plan to create nationwide access. Support for medical cannabis remains in the 90th percentile for Americans, two-thirds of medical professionals recognize some medical value in cannabis, and the U.S.'s top health agencies, HHS and FDA have found that there is "currently accepted medical use" for cannabis in the United States.

This journey includes passing state laws to remove criminal penalties and creating state-based distribution programs, creating internationally recognized product safety standards for the cannabis and hemp supply chain, participating in petitions and supporting efforts to reschedule cannabis in the US, removing barriers for research, changing the scheduling of cannabis in drug treaties through the World Health Organization and the United Nations, and passing federal legislation to end federal interference in state medical cannabis programs and to protect medical professionals.

Today, cannabis-based therapies provide relief to millions of Americans, often serving as a crucial alternative when conventional treatments have failed or as a safer option compared to pharmaceuticals' debilitating adverse effects and high potential for addiction. Patients and consumers across the United States can now access cannabis products in numerous forms from a variety of markets.

## APPROACH

**EDUCATE & EMPOWER:** ASA provides medical cannabis, wellness, and healthcare stakeholders with resources to better understand the therapeutic benefits of cannabis and cannabinoids, how to navigate laws and regulations safely, and how to advocate for patients in all policy matters. Through ASA's website, reports, trainings, and support programs, ASA informs stakeholders from the patient's perspective and empowers everyone to engage with patient advocates for better policy outcomes.

**HEALTHCARE INTEGRATION:** ASA works to integrate cannabis therapeutics into healthcare systems, aiming for medical cannabis to be covered by insurance and readily available nationwide. This involves addressing knowledge gaps and fostering a regulatory environment that supports medical cannabis use in treatment plans.

**ADVOCACY & POLICY:** ASA advocates for policies that remove barriers to access to cannabis therapeutics at state, federal, and international levels. ASA promotes the recognition of cannabis as a legitimate medicine, including policies that inform the development of standardized cannabis-based products, ensure a safe and consistent supply, and support the autonomy of individuals to cultivate and produce their medicines.

**PRODUCT SAFETY:** ASA has created internationally recognized product safety standards for the cannabis and hemp supply chain. ASA educates all stakeholders on the importance of product safety protocols, provides policy guidance and tools for their adoption, and offers training for the cannabis/hemp workforce and regulators.

**END DISCRIMINATION:** ASA strives to eliminate criminal penalties as well as employment, housing, parental, and healthcare discrimination against anyone who is utilizing cannabis in treatment or to improve their quality of life.

## ASA BOARD

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Founder & President  
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**Otha Smith III**  
CEO & Founder, Tetragram

**Chris Day**  
Co-founder, Global Cannabis  
Network Collective & Project  
Evolve

**Deborah Miran**  
Former Maryland Medical  
Cannabis Commissioner

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## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

ASA and our members have advanced public policy by integrating strategies across many disciplines. ASA has brought together policy experts, public health experts, attorneys, lobbyists, scientists, industry associations, and medical professionals to develop impactful campaigns, projects, and programs that have effectively dismantled political, social, academic, and legal barriers throughout the United States and across the globe.

**Advocacy for Medical Cannabis Patients:** ASA actively represents the interests of medical cannabis patients, influencing policy discussions at local, state, and federal levels.

**Shaping the Dialogue on Medical Cannabis:** ASA has reshaped the national conversation surrounding medical cannabis, challenging stigmas and fostering informed discussions.

**Legislative Successes:** ASA's advocacy efforts have led to the passage of impactful legislation supporting medical cannabis initiatives.

**Legal Victories:** ASA has secured significant legal victories in state and federal courts, protecting the rights of patients and stakeholders.

**Education and Training:** ASA offers top-tier legal and medical education tailored to the needs of medical cannabis stakeholders, empowering them with knowledge and expertise.

**Reintegration of Cannabis into Pharmacopeia:** ASA has played a crucial role in reintegrating cannabis into the Herbal Pharmacopeia, recognizing its therapeutic potential.

**Product Safety Standards:** ASA has created safety standards for medical cannabis products.

**Advocacy Training:** Join ASA's advocacy training programs to learn effective civil engagement strategies and amplify your voice in policy discussions.

**Global Patient Network:** Created a global network of patients to access support and collaboration opportunities worldwide.

**Accredited Education Programs:** Explore ASA's accredited educational programs for medical professionals, patients, and providers to gain essential knowledge and skills.

## PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, & CAMPAIGNS

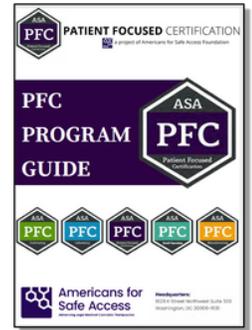
### CANNABIS CARE CERTIFICATION (CCC)



Cannabis Care Certification (CCC) is an online education program designed to help doctors provide the best care for legal medical cannabis patients and help patients get the most from their medical cannabis use. Recognized world experts have created CCC, which includes educational tools for medical professionals, patients, and their caregivers to better understand the role of cannabis therapeutics through a structured learning environment.

### PATIENT FOCUSED CERTIFICATION (PFC)

Patient Focused certification (PFC) is a groundbreaking initiative that provides individuals, companies, and governments with the tools needed to ensure safe, high-quality cannabis and hemp products. PFC includes regulatory guidance on GMP/GAP cannabis standards, third-party certification, and workforce training for any business or government agency, regardless of its stage of development or role in the supply chain.



### MEDICAL CANNABIS STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Successful medical cannabis policies and programs require participation from all stakeholders. ASA provides educational information, support, and resources for patients, caregivers, cannabis providers, advocates, and medical professionals.



### PATIENT ADVOCACY EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

Medical cannabis policy is better designed and implemented when patients are at the table. The reality is that if you are not a medical cannabis patient or stakeholder, you probably don't understand the nuances of cannabis policy. For the last 23 years, the Patient Advocacy Empowerment Project has been arming patients with the knowledge, tools, and skills to advocate for themselves through strategic planning, public speaking, bill drafting, media outreach, and citizen lobbying.

### PATIENTS' KNOW YOUR RIGHTS PROJECT

While medical cannabis is legal in many states, these laws vary dramatically from state to state, and cannabis remains illegal federally. For over 20 years, Americans for Safe Access has been arming patients and medical cannabis stakeholders with tools to know and express their rights.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Many arrests for cannabis happen during traffic violations or responses to noise complaints.

You only have rights if you exercise them!

**TRAVEL SAFELY · BE PREPARED · BE DISCREET**

202.857.4272  
AmericansForSafeAccess.org

**Americans for Safe Access**  
Advancing Legal Medical Cannabis Therapeutics

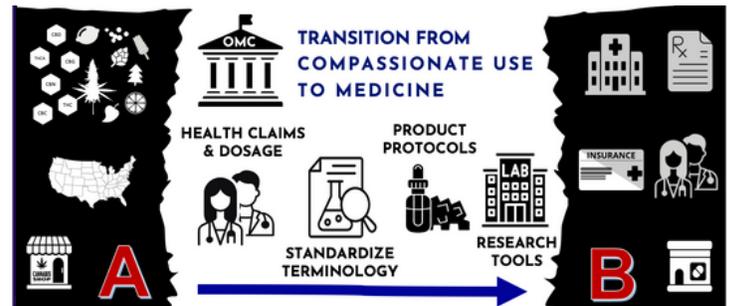
## THE CANNABIS & CANNABINOID MEDICINE INITIATIVE



The Cannabis and Cannabinoid Medicine Initiative (CCMI) is spearheading a transformative effort to integrate cannabis-based therapies into the U.S. healthcare system to create a more inclusive, compassionate, and effective healthcare framework for all Americans. Led by a diverse advisory group of healthcare, medical cannabis stakeholders, and cannabis policy experts, CCMI engages healthcare industry stakeholders to identify and address the gaps between state-level compassionate use programs and the requirements of the national healthcare infrastructure to include medical cannabis.

### FEDERAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

Since ASA opened our DC office in 2006, patients have had representation on Capitol Hill, through direct engagement with members of Congress and administrative agencies, and through countless public comments, white papers, policy memos, and reports.



ASA has also educated lawmakers on patient access to medical cannabis, roadblocks to research, and the role each federal agency can play in protecting patients. Each year, ASA helps medical cannabis patients from around the country to lobby together on Capitol Hill

### STATE ACCESS WATCHDOG PROJECT



While the longstanding federal prohibition on medical cannabis can frustrate state efforts, ASA has made tremendous progress on the state level in shaping medical cannabis policy, with forty states now having passed comprehensive medical cannabis programs. ASA regularly contributes comments to pending language for state legislation and regulations to ensure that state programs are patient-focused rather than profit-focused. ASA works with policymakers and advocates to improve regulations and legislation to better serve patients.

### RYAN'S LAW IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

In September 2021, "Ryan's Law" was signed into law in California, requiring healthcare facilities to allow the use of medical cannabis on their premises for terminally ill patients with a valid medical cannabis card or/ recommendation from their physician. ASA's Ryan's Law Implementation Project includes an implementation guide for healthcare facilities that summarizes the law, sample policy documents, draft SOPs, and resources for physicians and their patients to navigate the new rights afforded under the law.

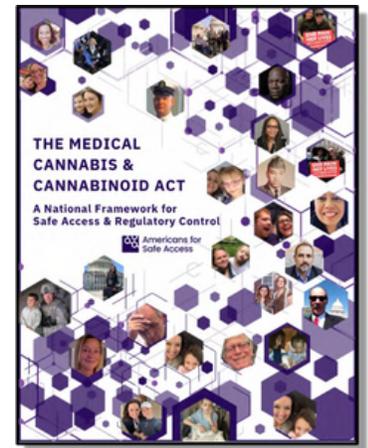


## SAFE ACCESS 4 ALL CAMPAIGN

Cannabis therapeutics are helping millions of Americans, often where all traditional options have failed or as a safer treatment option, and have changed how many patients and their medical professionals approach treatment for a variety of chronic illnesses. While state-level initiatives have demonstrated the potential of medical cannabis, the lack of federal laws and regulations poses challenges for patients, researchers, and medical practitioners, keeping cannabis treatments from reaching their full potential.

A national medical cannabis program would fill this void, ensuring uniformity in regulations, restoring rights for medical cannabis patients, creating nationwide access to cannabis for therapeutic use and research, and forging a new, purpose-built pathway for cannabis therapeutics.

Americans for Safe Access has developed a legislative framework for a national medical cannabis program that builds on the knowledge from the state-level experiment and includes input from patients, regulators, researchers, medical professionals, medical cannabis providers, and patient organizations, and incorporates the experience of the 65 countries with federal medical cannabis programs



[SAFEACCESS4ALL.ORG](https://SAFEACCESS4ALL.ORG)

## PATIENTS FIRST CAMPAIGN

“Patients First: A Compassionate Agenda for America” is a national campaign dedicated to protecting the rights and well-being of medical cannabis patients. Rooted in the belief that every patient deserves safe, affordable access to doctor-recommended treatments, the campaign seeks to dispel myths, shift public perception, and support meaningful policy changes. By advocating for pragmatic, science-based reforms, “Patients First” hopes to end punitive policies that jeopardize housing, employment, and healthcare for those whose only ‘offense’ is seeking relief from debilitating conditions.

Central to the campaign’s mission is ensuring that federal policy aligns with current medical knowledge and patient needs. Through coordinated efforts targeting both the White House and the 119th Congress, “Patients First” champions legislative measures—such as reinstating the Cole Memo, protecting veterans’ rights, and advancing comprehensive research—while fighting harmful proposals that threaten patient access. By uniting patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and advocates nationwide, this campaign signals a new era of compassion and common sense in America’s approach to medical cannabis.



[SAFEACCESSNOW.ORG/PATIENTSFIRST2025](https://SAFEACCESSNOW.ORG/PATIENTSFIRST2025)

## WHAT'S IN YOUR CANNABIS?

Cannabis is generally regarded as a safe product with low toxicity, but this assessment is based on whole-plant products that are free from contaminants and adulterants. However, many ingredients found in cannabis products, such as additives used for flavoring and consistency, synthesized compounds, and highly concentrated cannabinoids (THC, CBD, etc) and terpenes, might be safe, but scientific proof, especially for long-term use, is lacking. Also, cannabis is especially prone to contamination during cultivation, manufacturing, handling, and storage.



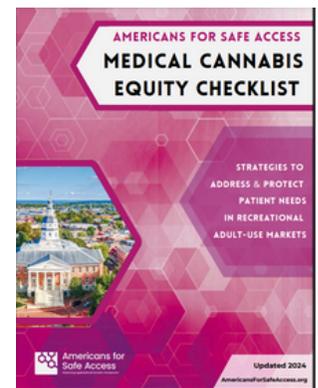
[WhatsInYourCannabis.org](https://WhatsInYourCannabis.org)

Unfortunately, it is not always clear how or if cannabis products are regulated or where to find credible sources about their legal status, safety, and efficacy: this is especially concerning if you are one of the millions of Americans who rely on cannabis as an invaluable medicine. Navigating cannabis safety involves recognizing when cannabis is not a suitable treatment option (or intoxicant), the risks associated with products in various markets, the potential impacts of label inaccuracies, and distinguishing common cannabis side effects from symptoms of contamination.

What's in Your Cannabis? Campaign is designed to empower patients and consumers with the knowledge to make informed decisions about cannabis and provides the tools they need to advocate for themselves and a safer cannabis future.

## MEDICAL CANNABIS EQUITY CAMPAIGN

As recreational adult-use cannabis programs have emerged across the country, it was believed they would improve patient access. Sadly, this hasn't been the case. In fact, we can see that after over a decade of dual market experiments, patients are being overlooked as states shift their focus to the recreational adult-use market, neglecting the needs of medical cannabis programs.



We can turn this trend around, but it will take the power of collective action. Together, we can create a more equitable future for medical cannabis patients by educating the public, media, businesses, and policymakers about the importance of medical cannabis equity.

Americans for Safe Access has created a series of tools for advocates to utilize to address these issues in their communities including sample legislative language, reports, fact sheets, and more. By joining the Medical Cannabis Equity Campaign, you are empowering yourself and other impacted stakeholders by standing up, speaking out, and making a lasting impact on the legislation and regulations that shape our communities.

[WWW.SAFEACCESSNOW.ORG/MEDICALEQUITY](https://WWW.SAFEACCESSNOW.ORG/MEDICALEQUITY)

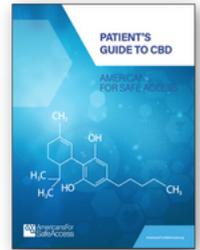
## ASA PUBLICATIONS

Americans for Safe Access has created a series of publications to help medical cannabis stakeholders navigate the medical, legal, and political aspects of cannabis. Below are a few examples and more can be found at [www.safeaccessnow.org/publications](http://www.safeaccessnow.org/publications).

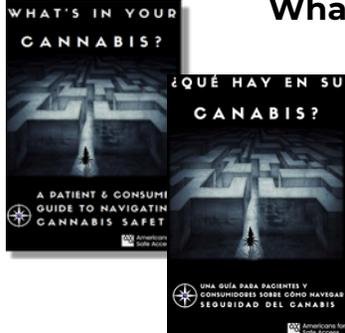
### Patient Guides to Medical Cannabis

[www.safeaccessnow.org/guides](http://www.safeaccessnow.org/guides)

For over 20 years ASA has been providing easy guides for patients, their caregivers, and their medical professionals to navigate the medical use of cannabis.



### What's in Your Cannabis? (Available in Spanish & English)



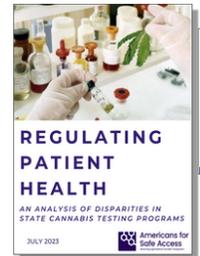
**A Patient & Consumer Guide to Navigating Cannabis Safety:** Whether patients are purchasing cannabis from regulated, grey, or illicit markets or cultivating their own cannabis, this guide was created to ensure patients can make informed decisions when choosing cannabis products by educating them about contaminants commonly found in cannabis, the symptoms that accompany their presence, potential drug interactions, and impacts on underlying health conditions.

[www.safeaccessnow.org/navigating\\_cannabis\\_safety](http://www.safeaccessnow.org/navigating_cannabis_safety)

### Regulating Patient Health

In this comprehensive report, "Regulating Patient Health: An Analysis of Disparities in State Cannabis Testing Programs," ASA meticulously examines disparities in cannabis testing programs across states relative to other regulated products, with a particular focus on their impact on patient health.

[www.SafeAccessNow.org/regulating\\_patient\\_health\\_report](http://www.SafeAccessNow.org/regulating_patient_health_report)



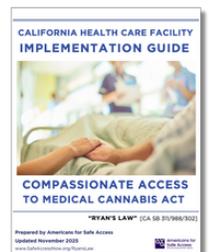
### Medical Cannabis as a Tool to Combat Opioid Crisis

This report identified barriers that prevent for patients from utilizing medical cannabis as a tool to combat pain and opioid use disorder. The report offered a blueprint for legislative and regulatory bodies to resolve these issues with improvements in state medical cannabis legislation and regulations to increase program enrollment and save lives. Advocates were able to move several state to add pain as a qualifying condition using the report. [safeaccessnow.org/opioidblueprint](http://safeaccessnow.org/opioidblueprint)

### Healthcare Facility Implementation Guide for Ryan's Law

The Compassionate Access to Medical Cannabis Act, also known as "Ryan's Law," requires California healthcare facilities to permit the use of medical cannabis on their premises for terminally ill patients or patients aged 65 and older with chronic diseases who hold a valid Medical Marijuana Identification Card (MMIC) or a physician's recommendation. guide and implementation tools to help California health care facilities remain in compliance with the responsibilities outlined in the Compassionate Access to Medical Cannabis Act.

[www.safeaccessnow.org/ryanslaw\\_facilityresources](http://www.safeaccessnow.org/ryanslaw_facilityresources)



### State of the States Series

ASA's State of the States Report evaluates medical cannabis programs in every state, territory, and D.C. graded from "A" to "F" across multiple categories. Each edition included report cards, detailed policy recommendations that provided lawmakers, regulators, journalists, and advocates with a clear roadmap for improvement. Patient advocates used the report to secure more than 800 changes in laws and regulations nationwide.

[www.safeaccessnow.org/sos22](http://www.safeaccessnow.org/sos22)

## Patient Advocacy Guides & Resources



ASA believes that medical cannabis patients and their care providers must have a voice, invested interest, and ownership in the development of the laws and regulations that impact their health and safety. Since 2002, ASA has been empowering advocates to participate in campaigns and projects that are shaping the future of medical cannabis. ASA's Advocacy Resources Center is designed to give patients the tools and training they need to participate.

[www.safeaccessnow.org/advocate\\_training\\_center](http://www.safeaccessnow.org/advocate_training_center)

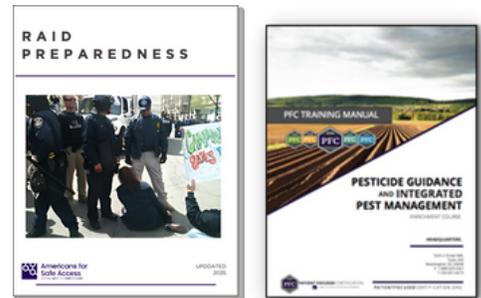
## Medical Cannabis Patients Travel Guide (Available in Spanish & English)



Cannabis remains illegal at the federal level, and the rights and privileges for medical cannabis patients vary from state to state. Cannabis products cannot be legally taken out of the state where they were purchased, requiring patients who travel for work or pleasure to navigate the laws, regulations, and markets in unfamiliar jurisdictions. ASA's travel guide is designed to help patients who are traveling to safely reach their destination and access medical cannabis (if possible) when they arrive. The Medical Cannabis Patient's Guide for U.S. Travel provides patients with the information they need to make informed decisions and evaluate risks when traveling.

[www.safeaccessnow.org/travel](http://www.safeaccessnow.org/travel)

## Other resources for Cannabis Businesses:



**ASA is A 501(C)3 nonprofit organization, Federal Tax ID: 51-0579227. All contributions are Tax-Deductible.**

For more information on ASA projects, programs, campaigns or discuss funding opportunities contact:

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