

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

200 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20201

and

Deans of U.S. Medical, Nursing, and Pharmacy Schools Including institutions participating in HHS's Advancing Nutrition Education Across the Medical Continuum

Re: Inclusion of the Endocannabinoid System (ECS) in Nutrition Education Curricula

August 12, 2026

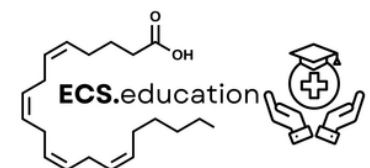
Dear Secretary Kennedy and Deans:

We applaud HHS's Advancing Nutrition Education Across the Medical Continuum initiative and participating medical schools for strengthening nutrition education as a tool for preventing and managing chronic disease. We are writing to offer practical guidance on integrating the endocannabinoid system (ECS) into course curricula so future clinicians receive a more complete understanding of the physiological relationship between nutrition and chronic disease.

The ECS plays a central role in maintaining homeostasis across multiple body systems and influences immune function, pain signaling, mood, sleep, stress adaptation, and metabolic control. ECS education provides clinicians with an essential framework for understanding both nutrition-related physiology and the broader biology that underlies cannabinoid therapeutics and ECS signaling in human health.

Often described as a missing chapter in human physiology because of its broad regulatory role in human health and its continued absence from premedical, medical, and allied health curricula, as well as from basic biology curricula, the ECS is directly relevant to many of the areas of this initiative. Education about the system has remained limited, in part because its discovery emerged through cannabis research and has long been shaped by the stigma and policy barriers surrounding that field.

Nutrition education provides one of the most practical and clinically relevant entry points for teaching ECS physiology. Integrating core ECS concepts into existing nutrition education improves the scientific foundation of nutrition training and better prepares clinicians to understand metabolism, appetite regulation, inflammation, and chronic disease. The accompanying rationale and guidance document outlines why ECS education is integral to the goals of HHS's initiative and offers practical suggestions for integrating it into HHS's voluntary competency framework as well as examples of its inclusion in existing nutrition-related competencies and courses.



Clinicians are already being asked to respond to increasingly complex chronic disease burdens while also navigating patient questions related to cannabinoids and cannabinoid-related care. Integrating the ECS into HHS's Advancing Nutrition Education initiative is a practical step toward aligning medical education more closely with current science and patient needs.

Americans for Safe Access and the undersigned experts are available to support HHS, medical, nursing, and pharmacy schools, and health curriculum leaders in identifying appropriate competencies, refining course content, recommending literature, and developing evidence-informed approaches to incorporating ECS concepts into existing nutrition education. We offer this guidance document not only as a recommendation, but as an open invitation to work together to ensure that medical education reflects current science and better prepares clinicians and health care staff to meet patient needs.

Sincerely,

Stephen Dahmer, MD
Director, Andrew Weil Center
for Integrative Medicine

Steven Philpott MSc
Co-Founder & CEO
Anzisha Consulting

Codi Peterson, PharmD
Clinical Pharmacist

Steph Sherer
Founder & President
Americans for Safe Access

Roy Upton RH, DipAyu
President
American Herbal Pharmacopoeia

Peter Grinspoon, MD
Primary Care Physician
Massachusetts General Hospital

Graham Rigby
President & CEO
American Herbal
Products Association

Daniele Piomelli, PhD
Distinguished Professor
University of California, Irvine

Michelle Sexton, ND
Medical Staff Professional
University of California, SD

**Sunil Aggarwal, MD, PhD,
FAAPMR, FAAHPM**
Co-Director, AIMS Institute

Stefan Broselid, PhD
ECS.education

Dr. Ryan Vandrey
Research & Professor
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Sasha Kalcheff-Korn
Executive Director
Realm of Caring Foundation

Genester Wilson-King, MD, FACOG
President
Society of Cannabis Clinicians

Chip Paul
Chief Science Officer
GnuMedX

Patricia Frye, MD, FAAP, DipABLM
Medical Director
Takoma Park Integrative Care

Dustin Sulak, DO
Integr8 Health

Karen Jaynes, MS
Co-Founder
Infinite Leadership

Holly Lang, PharmD
Cannabis Dispensary Pharmacist

Deanna Sommers, PhD, MSN, RN
President
American Cannabis Nurses Association

Chris Meletis
Family Practice PCP /
Naturopathic Physician
Divine Medicine

Riley Kirk
CEO & Co-Founder
The Network of Applied Pharmacognosy

Lihi Bar-Lev Schleider, PhD
Medical Director, Tikun Olam

Drudys Ledbetter, BSN, RN
Founder, Project
Destigmatize HealthCare

Denise Costello RN, MS
Founder, Your Elevated Way

Dr. Jeff Rawson
Chair, Institute of
Cannabis Science

Janice Makela, MD
Janice Makela M.D. LLC

Renee Reisinger, MSN,
Adult/Women's Health Nurse Practitioner
Board Member, Veterans Initiative 22

Marion McNabb, DrPH, MPH
President, Cannabis Center of Excellence

Jeffrey Raber, PhD
CEO, The Werc Shop

Erin Gorman Kirk, Esq.
Office of the Cannabis Ombudsman
State of Connecticut

Priscilla Agoncillo
CEO, Original Breeders League

Paul Walton
Executive Director
Firefighters for Plant Medicine

Amy Mahar, PhD, RDN

Amanda Reiman, PhD, MSW

Alexis Muller, MS

Cassin Coleman
Founder, Cassin Consulting LLC

AIMS Institute
American Cannabis Nurses Association
American Herbal Pharmacopoeia
American Herbal Products Association
Americans for Safe Access
Anzisha

Cannabis Center of Excellence
Cannabis Nurses of Color (CNOC)
Firefighters for Plant Medicine
Institute of Cannabis Science
Project Destigmatize HealthCare

Realm of Caring Foundation
Society of Cannabis Clinicians
CT Office of the Cannabis Ombudsman
U.S. Pain Foundation
Veterans Initiative 22

Enclosure: A Call for the Inclusion of the Endocannabinoid System (ECS) in Nutrition Education Curricula

www.SafeAccessNow.org/ECS_and_Nutrition