

*This report was compiled by Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Inc. (ACHS) clinical staff for informational purposes, and does not replace any advice one might receive from a qualified health care provider.*

*Founded in 1975, Ammonoosuc Community Health Services is a nonprofit community health center offering a network of quality, affordable primary health services. Our programs promote and support the well-being of individuals and families by emphasizing preventive care and encouraging active participation in one's own health. ACHS serves 26 towns in northern Grafton and southern Coös counties and has sites located in Littleton, Franconia, Whitefield, Warren and Woodsville. We provide comprehensive services, regardless of one's ability to pay, to over 10,000 patients.*



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## *Medical Marijuana*



## Medical Marijuana

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Littleton • Franconia • Warren • Whitefield • Woodsville

# Medical Marijuana

*Medical marijuana continues to be a topic of conversation and controversy.*

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## WHERE DOES ACHS STAND AMIDST THE CONTROVERSY?

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ACHS is a federally qualified health center and, as such, receives federal funding to assist with patient care. Marijuana is still illegal under federal law. Therefore, ACHS cannot participate in the prescription of medical marijuana even though it has been approved by the State of New Hampshire. To do so would put federal funding that assists so many patients receiving healthcare at risk.

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### RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH USING MARIJUANA

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- Carcinogenic materials in marijuana (tar levels are higher than tobacco)
- Lung disease
- Increased appetite and weight gain
- Decreased reaction time (higher rates of car accidents)
- Impaired decision-making
- Increased rates of depression, anxiety, psychosis (disordered thinking) and an amotivational syndrome (with chronic use) associated with use
- Dependency/withdrawal symptoms if stopped
- Heart effects (low blood pressure when standing, heart attacks/stroke have been reported)

- Bad effects on babies when pregnant women use (decreased growth, effect on school performance)
- Interactions with medications
- Fatal to pets with accidental overdose

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### BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH USING MARIJUANA

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Benefits associated with long term use of marijuana for chronic pain are not well documented. Beneficial effects on other diseases such as glaucoma, multiple sclerosis, and seizures are possible. Use of medical marijuana as an appetite stimulant and improvement in nausea in some patients shows some promise. Generally, other less risky, more studied medications are available.

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## WILL MY ACHS PROVIDER SIGN MY CARD?

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Because ACHS receives federal grant funding and marijuana is still illegal under federal law, your ACHS provider is not able to certify you for medical marijuana even in the cases where the benefits may possibly outweigh the risks.