



# CALIFORNIA SCHOOL NURSES ORGANIZATION

Optimizing Student Health and Enhancing Learning



October 5, 2021

Sent via email to both addressees and Michael Davis

Loretta Melby RN, MSN  
Executive Officer  
Board of Registered Nursing  
Department of Consumer Affairs  
1747 N. Market Blvd, Suite 150  
Sacramento, CA 95834-1924

Elizabeth Woods, RN, FNP, MSN  
Nursing Practice Committee Chair  
Board of Registered Nursing  
Department of Consumer Affairs  
1747 N. Market Blvd. Suite 150  
Sacramento, CA 95834-1924

**RE: Agenda Item 7.4 – Discussion and Possible Action Regarding  
The Administration of Medical Marijuana in Schools  
BRN Nursing Practice Committee Meeting – October 7, 2021**

Dear Ms. Melby and Ms. Elizabeth Woods:

We are responding to Agenda Item 7.4 scheduled to be heard on Thursday, October 7, 2021. The California School Nurses Organization (CSNO) is the professional school nurse organization and as the primary health professional in the K-12 system provides programs and services that enhance learning and optimize student health.

We write today to provide information on California's school nurses as it relates to the issue raised in the aforementioned documents – Education Code citations, FDA authorization, and a policy position from the National School Nurses Association regarding the use of medical cannabis in California's schools. The definition of a credentialed school nurse and their functions are described in Education Code – Title 2 Elementary and Secondary Education, Section 49426.

The Nurse Practice Act (B &P 2725) provides the broad framework for all registered nurses in California, however, the role and functions of the credentialed school nurse are found in

3511 Del Paso Road, Suite 160, PMB 230  
Sacramento, CA 95835  
(916) 448-5752, Fax: (844) 273-0846  
Email: [csno@csno.org](mailto:csno@csno.org) Website: [www.csno.org](http://www.csno.org)

the Education Code. We concur that a school nurse is not prohibited from administering medical cannabis under the NPA.

However, the Education Code states:

Education Code - Title 2 Sections 49400 - 49417  
see specific Section 49414.1 - (g) This section does not require the staff of a school district, county office of education or charter school to administer medicinal cannabis. *(Amended by Stats. 2020, Ch. 370, Sec. 80. (SB 1371) Effective January 1, 2021.)*

It should also be noted that any health care provided in the schools is done solely based on the orders of the child's physician. We concur that under IDEA a child is to receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE) and all that entails. The case referenced and the medication provided for the child occurred within a private pre-school school setting with an LVN available to provide the care and medication when needed. This is not a usual situation within public K-12 or charter school setting and LVNs are not considered school nurses as noted in Education Code 49426.

The following provide guidance for school nurses and the administration of medical cannabis in the K-12 setting:

We submit the following from the FDA regarding the authorization of Epidiolex:  
[FDA Approves First Drug Comprised of an Active Ingredient Derived from Marijuana to Treat Rare, Severe Forms of Epilepsy | FDA](#)

School nurses, if administering medical cannabis, are only doing so if it is Epidiolex and any other FDA approved medications. At this time the other approved cannabis related products, Marinol, Syndros, and Cesamet, have not been prescribed for school-age children to the best of our knowledge. Further, we are aligned with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) statement of off-label use of drugs in children when the student's healthcare provider has weighed the risk and benefits in prescribing such medications for children in a medically necessary situation (below).

Our position on medical cannabis for the treatment of epilepsy follows the FDA authorization and guidance from the National Association of School Nurses  
[Position Brief - Cannabis/Marijuana - National Association of School Nurses \(nasn.org\)](#)

We also provide for your review:

[Medical Cannabis and School: Separating Fact From Fiction - MaryAnn Tapper Strawhacker, 2020 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

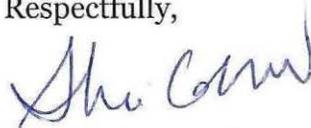
[Medical Marijuana Guidelines for Practice: Health Policy Implications \(ncsbn.org\)](#)

[Off-Label Use of Drugs in Children | American Academy of Pediatrics \(aappublications.org\)](#)

We are hopeful going forward that whenever issues arise relating to the practice of school nursing, CSNO continues to be consulted. Our practice is, as noted in the 2020 BRN Sunset Review document, different from other settings and as such all state codes should be reviewed along with best practices and guidance from our professional organizations.

If there are questions or more information is required, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sheri Coburn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Sheri Coburn, EdD, MS, RN, PHN, RCSN  
Executive Director Consultant  
California School Nurses Organization