

# Healthcare & Hospital Management

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# International Conference & Exhibition on **Biologics and Biosimilars**

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## Mary Lynn Mathre

*Patients Out of Time, USA*

### **Cannabis and harm reduction: A nursing perspective**

**H**arm reduction is a public health model that serves to accept people as they are and provide education and services or treatments that can reduce negative health effects related to their behaviors, especially for those with drug abuse problems. The concept of harm reduction can be broadened to include interventions that help a person reduce negative health effects from a wide range of treatments and/or behaviors. *Cannabis* is a healing herb that can be an effective harm reduction agent in health care practices. While the U.S. may be lacking in double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trials on the medical use of *Cannabis*; the long history of its use, the remarkably wide margin of safety, and the discovery of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) provide clear evidence to support the innumerable anecdotal reports of *Cannabis* as a safe and effective medicine for a wide variety of indications. This presentation will provide a broad overview of the ECS and its role in health maintenance and healing and explain how *Cannabis* can supplement the ECS. Nurses play a key role in the overall management of patient care, including the administration of medications and treatments and monitoring the subsequent effects of those interventions as well as educating patients on health promotion and health maintenance behaviors. The federal prohibition of *Cannabis* is baseless and the source of most, if not all, harms related to the use of *Cannabis*. In states where medical *Cannabis* has been

available to patients there have been a decrease in healthcare costs, a decrease in opioid overdoses, and a decrease in crime and domestic violence. This presentation will present a paradigm shift in recognizing the potential value of *Cannabis* as a therapeutic harm reduction agent rather than its exaggerated harms as a drug of abuse.

#### **Speaker Biography**

Mary Lynn Mathre is the President and Co-founder of Patients Out of Time, a national non-profit organization dedicated to educating health care professionals and the public about the therapeutic use of *Cannabis*. She is Editor of "*Cannabis in Medical Practice: A Legal, Historical Pharmacological Overview of the Therapeutic Use of Cannabis*" (1997) and Co-editor of "*Women and Cannabis: Medicine, Science and Sociology*" (2002). She received her BSN from the College of St. Teresa in Winona, MN in 1975 and began her Nursing career in the US Navy Nurse Corps until 1979. Her specialty was Medical Surgical Nursing. She began teaching at the University of Virginia School of Nursing, but changed her focus to Addictions Nursing in 1987 and returned to clinical practice first on the Addictions Treatment Unit at UVA, then as the Addictions Consult Nurse for the UVA Health System and from 2004-2007 she was Executive Director of an opioid treatment program in Charlottesville. Currently, she is an Independent Addictions Consultant. She has authored *Cannabis* resolutions for several organizations including the Virginia Nurses Association, the National Nurses Society on Addictions (now the International Nurses Society on Addictions), and the American Public Health Association; written numerous articles and chapters on medicinal *Cannabis*; and served as an expert witness. She is a Founding Member and President of the newly created American *Cannabis* Nurses Association.

e: [mlmathre@hughes.net](mailto:mlmathre@hughes.net)

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