

Dartmouth
Health

Southwestern Vermont
Medical Center

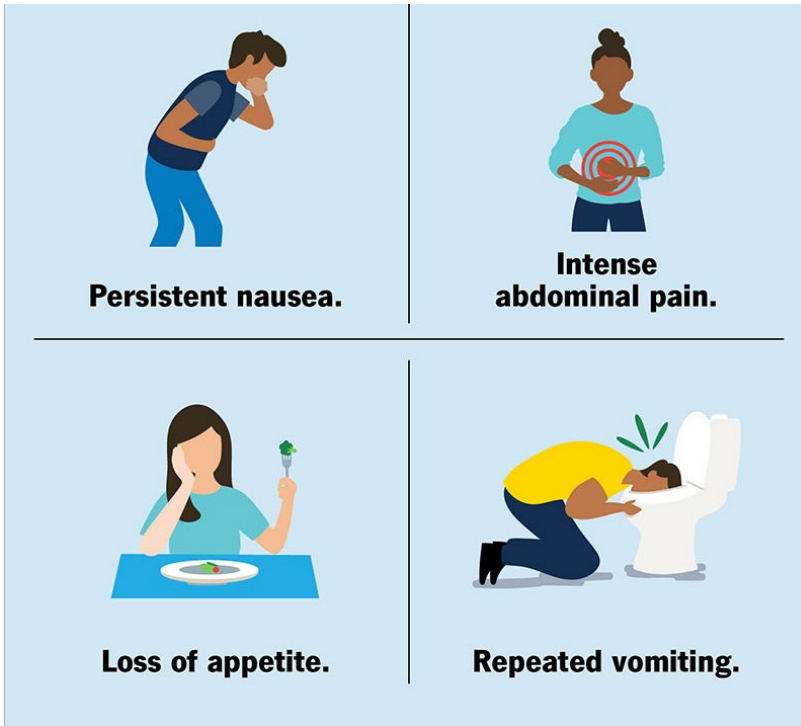
Cannabis Hyperemesis Syndrome

Is VT spending more on cannabis-related healthcare
than it receives in cannabis tax revenue?

James Trimarchi
Director of Planning
Southwestern Vermont Medical Center
james.trimarchi@svhealthcare.org

February, 2026

Cannabis Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS)



What is CHS?

- Debilitating cyclical vomiting, nausea, and abdominal pain occurring with daily, high-dose cannabis use
- Typically seen in young/middleaged adults
- More likely to get CHS if start using cannabis as a teen

Symptoms:

- Cyclic vomiting, nausea & abdominal pain
- Hot shower/bath is commonly used as temporary relief
- Gradually progressing symptoms for years is possible



Scromiting- scream vomiting

Recent NYTimes Articles

The New York Times

Psychosis, Addiction, Chronic Vomiting: As Weed Becomes More Potent, Teens Are Getting Sick

With THC levels close to 100 percent, today's cannabis products are making some teenagers highly dependent and dangerously ill.

The New York Times APRIL 5, 2018

A Perplexing Marijuana Side Effect Relieved by Hot Showers (Published 2018)

by RONI CARYN RABIN

Emergency room doctors are seeing a growing caseload of nausea and vomiting in marijuana users whose only relief is a long, hot shower.

The New York Times

As America's Marijuana Use Grows, So Do the Harms

The drug, legal in much of the country, is widely seen as nonaddictive and safe. For some users, these assumptions are dangerously wrong.

“Why don't more doctors know about it? Why didn't anyone ever mention it to me?”

Jennifer Macaluso suffered terrible health effects using cannabis for migraine headaches.

The New York Times

‘It Took Over Everything’: Stories of Marijuana’s Little-Known Risks

A growing number of marijuana users in the U.S. are experiencing severe health problems like these.

In addition to many CHS articles in the medical literature

Patients are crying out for help and struggling with accepting that their medical condition is caused by cannabis

- Facebook group (CHS) with more than 7,000 members

<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/1GVURToTYU/?mibextid=wwXlfr> [facebook.com]

- 2023 article- International Society of Addiction 2023 article
 - Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome perceptions among people with chronic cannabis use and cyclic vomiting
- Quotes from CHS sufferers are heart wrenching

"I'm not the only one. Currently bedridden and my only relief is hot showers but I'm going to run out of propane soon. I 12 days removed from cannabis but not my first rodeo and I should know better but I don't wish this on my worst enemy. Anyone somehow find relief?"

"My son was treated in the ER for this yesterday. He has taken 5 showers today and 2 baths. The nausea is bad and nothing is staying down. I feel so bad for him...Any advice as to how long this could last or any home remedy?"

"I'm 18 days clean still having small episodes but the stress on my body was intense ended up having a mild heart attack on Sunday morning and still in the hospital. Seems like this hell will never end.."

"Hello I've been struggling with CHS since being 17 (3 years now) dose anyone else vomit every month and have so much pain to the point where the hospital just gives the most strongest medication. I am 1 week clean from smoking and I know it's the only answer. I have been kicked out of home because of constant vomiting."

It is official, CHS is real (R11.16)! October 2025

Mysterious marijuana-linked vomiting disorder gets official WHO code as ER cases jump

WHO adds cannabis-related syndrome to diagnostic manual as ER visits spike 650% since 2016

The World Health Organization (WHO) has formally added cannabis hyperemesis syndrome (CHS) to its diagnostic manual, according to guidance published by the agency in October, giving the mysterious disorder a dedicated code for the first time. The update, which took effect Oct. 1 and is now adopted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, allows physicians nationwide to identify, track and study the condition rather than lumping it into broader vomiting or gastrointestinal categories.

CHS is a dangerous and sometimes deadly syndrome that, according to the National Institutes of Health, affects chronic cannabis users, causing severe nausea, repeated vomiting, abdominal pain, dehydration, weight loss and, in rare cases, heart rhythm problems, seizures, kidney failure and death.

Patients often describe a horrifying symptom known as "scromiting," screaming and vomiting at the same time due to extreme pain, according to the Cleveland Clinic.

CHS frequency increases when cannabis is legalized and when higher THC levels are approved

Cannabis Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS) in the emergency department

- There is no blood test or definitive medical diagnostic test for CHS
- Emergency department physicians are reticent to document a condition as CHS due to the risk of lawsuits for misdiagnosis – instead they document “unknown uncontrolled vomiting”
- **Diagnostic Criteria:** Physicians are encouraged to use the Rome IV criteria for diagnosis, which includes cannabis use, relief of symptoms through, compulsive, hot showers, and **costly**, invasive testing to rule out everything else.
- **Treatment:** The only cure for CHS is complete cessation of cannabis use; in the ER, CHS is managed through, intravenous fluids, antiemetics, and sometimes, benzodiazepines.

SVMC Data

- SVMC's ED sees roughly **2 patients daily** with suspected CHS
- Over 7,000 CHS ED visits per year in VT
- 18% of CHS patients spend **more than 6 hours** in the SVMC's ED, expensive patient work-ups (many lab and imaging tests to rule out other conditions)
- 76% of patients are **VT residents**
- 42% of individuals are 20-40 years old
- 47% of patients are covered by **VT Medicaid**
- Estimated **\$5.5M** in emergency department care annually paid for by Vermont patients and insurers
- More than **\$2M** in emergency department care paid for by VT Medicaid
- **Additional CHS-driven healthcare spending** through primary care and endoscopy procedures

VT state is at risk of law suit from a CHS patient

- VT's cannabis product warning label does not warn users of the known CHS risk

*Cannabis has not been analyzed or approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). For use by individuals 21 years of age and older or registered qualifying patient only. **KEEP THIS PRODUCT AWAY FROM CHILDREN AND PETS. DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING.** Possession or use of cannabis may carry significant legal penalties in some jurisdictions and under federal law. It may not be transported outside of the state of Vermont. **The effects of edible cannabis may be delayed by two hours or more.** Cannabis may be habit forming and can impair concentration, coordination, and judgment. Persons 25 years and younger may be more likely to experience harm to the developing brain.*

It is against the law to drive or operate machinery when under the influence of this product. National Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222.

The Very Large and Vexing Lawsuit Re: Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome

PUBLISHED: JUNE 19, 2025



VINCE SLIWOSKI



- VT state at risk of a large lawsuit from a sick patient for negligence for not properly warning consumers

Recommendation

- Immediately include CHS on VT's cannabis product warning label
 - Immediately include CHS as a risk on the VT state's point of sale flyer
 - Immediately include CHS as a risk on the VT state's Let's Talk Cannabis website
- Cannabis has not been analyzed or approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Must be 21 years of age and older or a registered qualifying patient only. **KEEP THIS PRODUCT AWAY FROM CHILDREN AND PETS. DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING.** Possession or use of cannabis may carry significant legal penalties in some jurisdictions outside of Vermont and under federal law. **The effects of edible cannabis may be delayed by two hours or more.** Cannabis may be habit-forming and can impair concentration, coordination, and judgment. **Health risks associated with daily to near-daily use may include: Uncontrollable vomiting, nausea, stomach pain, psychosis, and increased risk of suicide. Lung damage may result from cannabis smoke and vapor.** Persons 25 years and younger may be more likely to experience harm to the developing brain.*

It is against the law to drive or operate machinery when under the influence of this product. National Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222.
- **Do not pass the proposed bill** until more data has been analyzed by DVHA on the full financial impact of CHS on VT Medicaid spending
 - The proposed bill increase potency, package size, purchase limits, and under 21 advertising - all things known to increase the incidence of CHS
 - **It is possible that VT state is spending more on cannabis-related health care than it receives in cannabis retail sales taxes**