

Families Migrate West for Medical Marijuana

Thursday, 20 February 2014 18:36



Colorado's liberal marijuana laws and its market for a strain of marijuana called "Charlotte's Web" has made it a destination for families whose children suffer with severe epilepsy, according to *USA Today*.

In January, Colorado became the first state to allow recreational marijuana use for adults, and medical marijuana has been legal since 2000.

An additional 19 states and Washington, D.C. also allow medical marijuana, but each state varies the diseases for which it is allowed.

Realm of Caring, a Colorado Foundation, was started by the family that grows Charlotte's Web.

According to its executive director, the foundation has 100 patients whose families have moved to Colorado from 43 states and two countries. In total, the foundation has 200 children who are medical marijuana patients. The waiting list has more than 2,000 people.

Charlotte's Web is named after Charlotte Figi, the first child to try the strain two years ago. At that time, she suffered 60 seizures a day. Today, her parents say that she has none.

It is taken in liquid form and is high in cannabidiol, an ingredient in marijuana considered to have medical applications. Cannabidiol is believed to act as a deterrent on parts of the brain that cause epileptic seizures.

Organizations such as the Epilepsy Foundation and the American Epilepsy Society are conservative in their opinion. Families are not dissuaded from using medical marijuana, but are warned that there is not enough evidence to demonstrate safety and effectiveness. They urge patients to consult their doctor to determine what's best for them.

Adolescent substance abuse experts warn against using marijuana for any purpose, citing negative long-term effects on children, such as impaired brain function and addiction.