



WHOLISTICRELEAF™

A DIVISION OF
WHOLISTIC PEDIATRICS & FAMILY CARE
ESTABLISHED IN 2005

Kissimmee Boy with Rare Epilepsy Finds Relief with CBD

“Out of nowhere Marcos started having seizures when he was four years old,” said Joanna. “We started giving him medications to help control them, but he had horrible reactions, throwing himself against the wall. It is very hard to see your child going through this.”

Marcos Ramos was diagnosed with Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (LGS), a rare and severe form of epilepsy. Often appearing in infancy or early childhood, LGS causes those affected to have multiple types of seizures including tonic (stiffen) seizures, atonic (causes the body to go limp) seizures, and atypical absence seizures (partial or complete loss of consciousness). LGS seizures are dangerous and difficult to control as they often do not respond well to anti-epileptic medications. In addition to LGS, Marcos has nonverbal autism and anxiety.



Gupta, which opened her eyes to the benefits of cannabidiol (CBD), which did not have the euphoric effects often attributed to cannabis consumption. She learned about Charlotte’s Web, a high-CBD, low-THC strain that was developed in Colorado for a young girl who had a rare form of epilepsy. For the first time in years, Joanna felt hope. However, it wasn’t yet available in Florida.

From a friend, Joanna learned about Dr. David Berger, a pioneer in wholistic pediatric health who a few years later would help lead the fight to legalize medical cannabis in Florida.

“With Dr. Berger’s guidance, we changed his diet and tried some other natural treatments, but nothing helped,” said Joanna.

Marcos’s seizure appearance continued to change as he aged. He began having atonic or drop seizures around ten times per day.

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“CBD transformed Marcos. Not only did his seizures stop, his EEG, which reads the electrical activity of the brain, showed improvement.”

Desperate to help her son, Joanna Villarreal and her husband, Jorge Ramos, both from Kissimmee, began researching possible treatments and medications to help reduce their little boy’s seizures without the horrible side effects.

For four years they searched for a solution but found none. Then in 2014, Joanna saw a documentary by Dr. Sanjay

www.WholisticReLeaf.com

About
David Berger,
MD, FAAP



Dr. David Berger (“Dr. David”), a Board Certified Pediatrician with over 20 years of experience as a clinician, has developed a national reputation in wholistic pediatric primary care. Dr. David is considered Tampa Bay area’s leading authority on medical cannabis for adults and children and is one of the nation’s most experienced pediatricians using medical cannabis to help facilitate the treatment of children with chronic conditions.

Dr. David graduated from The Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1994 and completed his pediatric residency at the University of South Florida/Tampa General Hospital where he first began utilizing wholistic therapies. Dr. David has been in private practice since 1997 and in 2005 opened Wholistic Pediatrics & Family Care, his medical practice in Tampa, Florida. In 2010, Dr. David was appointed Assistant Professor at the University of South Florida College of Nursing. In 2016, he launched Wholistic ReLeaf to help qualified patients become certified to use medical cannabis.

"His drop seizures were so bad we couldn't leave him by himself," said Joanna. "Letting him take a bath alone was never an option."

They increased the dosage of Marcos's medication every six months, but they still could not control his seizures.

Finally, in August of 2017, they got the green light, and Dr. Berger certified Marcos for medical cannabis. But life had other plans for this family. Joanna's mother in law was dying from cancer, and the money they were going to use for medical cannabis was diverted to her care and medications, which had to be paid out of pocket.

Eventually, it was Marcos's time, and in July of 2018, Joanna started him on CBD under the dosing guidance of Dr. Berger. Marcos was nine years old.

"We started him on a very low dose and would gradually increase this weekly," said Joanna. "He had no side effects at all."

CBD transformed Marcos. Not only did his seizures stop, his EEG, which reads the electrical activity of the brain, showed improvement. This is significant because people with LGS often do not see improvements regardless of the treatment used. His parents also hope to stop or reduce the anti-seizure medication he has been taking in the coming months.

"LGS is a debilitating condition causing many people never to talk or walk," said Joanna. "When I compare Marcos with the kids from the LGS Foundation, he is nothing like them thanks to CBD."

In 2018, the first plant-derived cannabinoid medicine (Epidiolex) was FDA approved for the treatment of seizures associated with Lennox Gastaut syndrome and Dravet syndrome. The FDA approved package insert suggests starting patients his weight at 90mg of CBD twice a day and then to consider increasing up to 360mg twice a day as needed.

"Miraculously, Marcos has therapeutic relief with just 50mg twice a day," said Dr. Berger. "He uses two products, a sativa-dominant product, which has been more effective for Marcos, and an indica-dominant product."

While Marcos still has a significant communication delay, he is now speaking. The older he gets, the more verbal and confident he becomes. Marcos doesn't have full conversations like many other children his age, but can verbally express what he wants, which profoundly decreases the frustrations he once had.

"The other day Marcos offered to help me in the kitchen," said Joanna. "I had what felt like a normal conversation with him like he was one of my other kids."

Marcos is also learning to be independent. He can take showers by himself without fear of having a seizure. Marcos is also doing much better in school and is social among his peers. Another big win for the family is that Marcos is finally able to get a haircut without his anxiety cutting the haircut short.



"We haven't told a lot of people (about Marcos taking medical cannabis) because of the stereotype, but we now feel we have nothing to lose and a lot to gain," said Joanna. "We hope our story helps others."

For more information about the transformative effects of medical cannabis, visit Wholistic ReLeaf at WholisticReLeaf.com.



About Wholistic ReLeaf

Wholistic ReLeaf, founded in 2016 by Dr. David Berger of Wholistic Pediatric and Family Care, empowers families and patients to choose the best treatment approach available for their medical condition. The mission of Wholistic ReLeaf is to evaluate and certify qualified patients who meet the State of Florida legal requirements for receiving medical cannabis and provide medical cannabis management and dosing consultations to patients certified by other Florida physicians. Wholistic ReLeaf is committed to providing patients with the best possible care, while also complying with the ever-shifting legal landscape of medical cannabis in the State of Florida.

For more information, or to find out if you or someone you know may be eligible to use medical cannabis as part of a customized treatment plan, visit www.WholisticReLeaf.com.