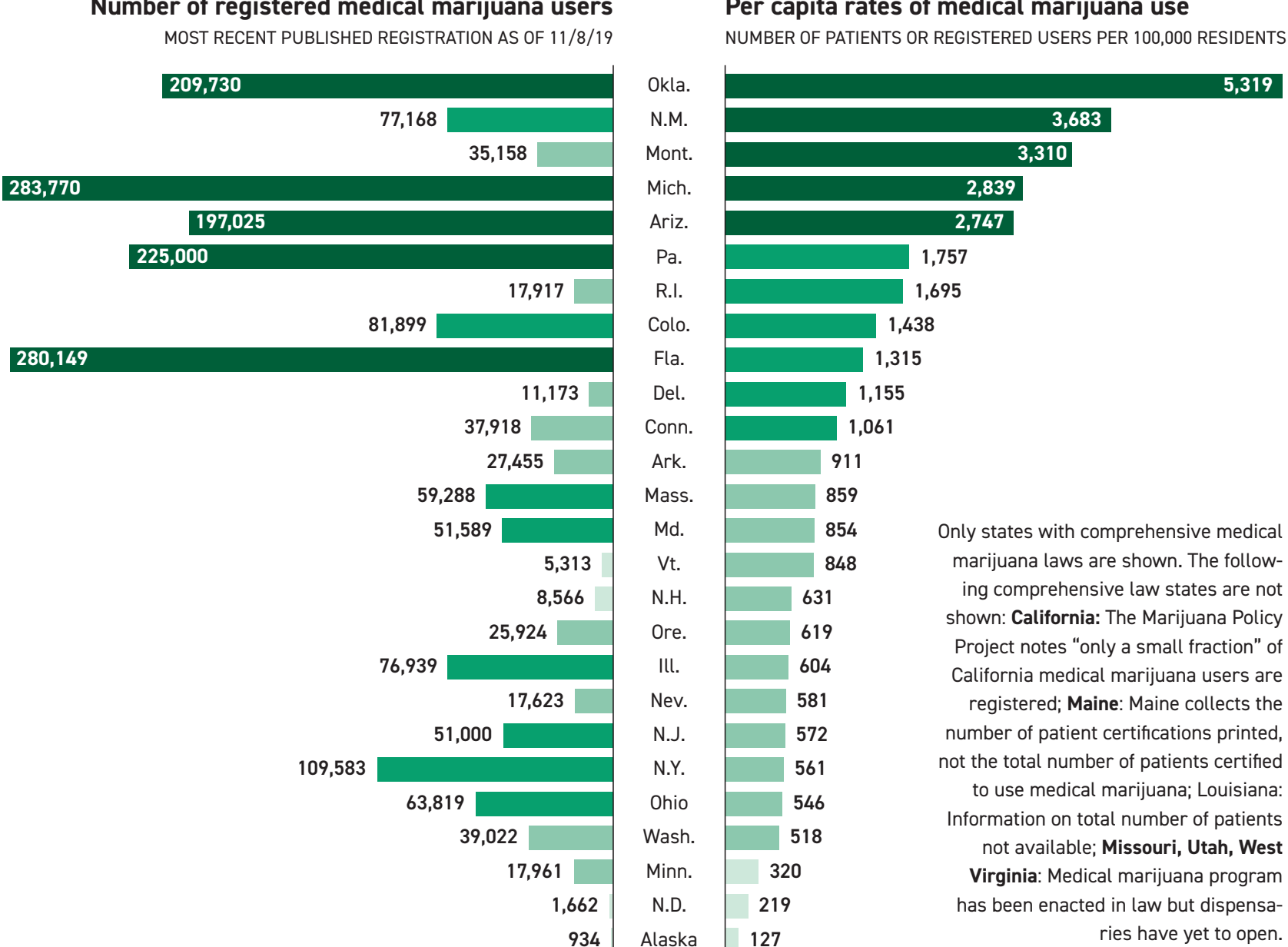


Medical marijuana has spread across the country. What does that look like in those states?

Patients in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and four of five U.S. territories can now use some form of cannabis to treat a range of illnesses and symptoms.

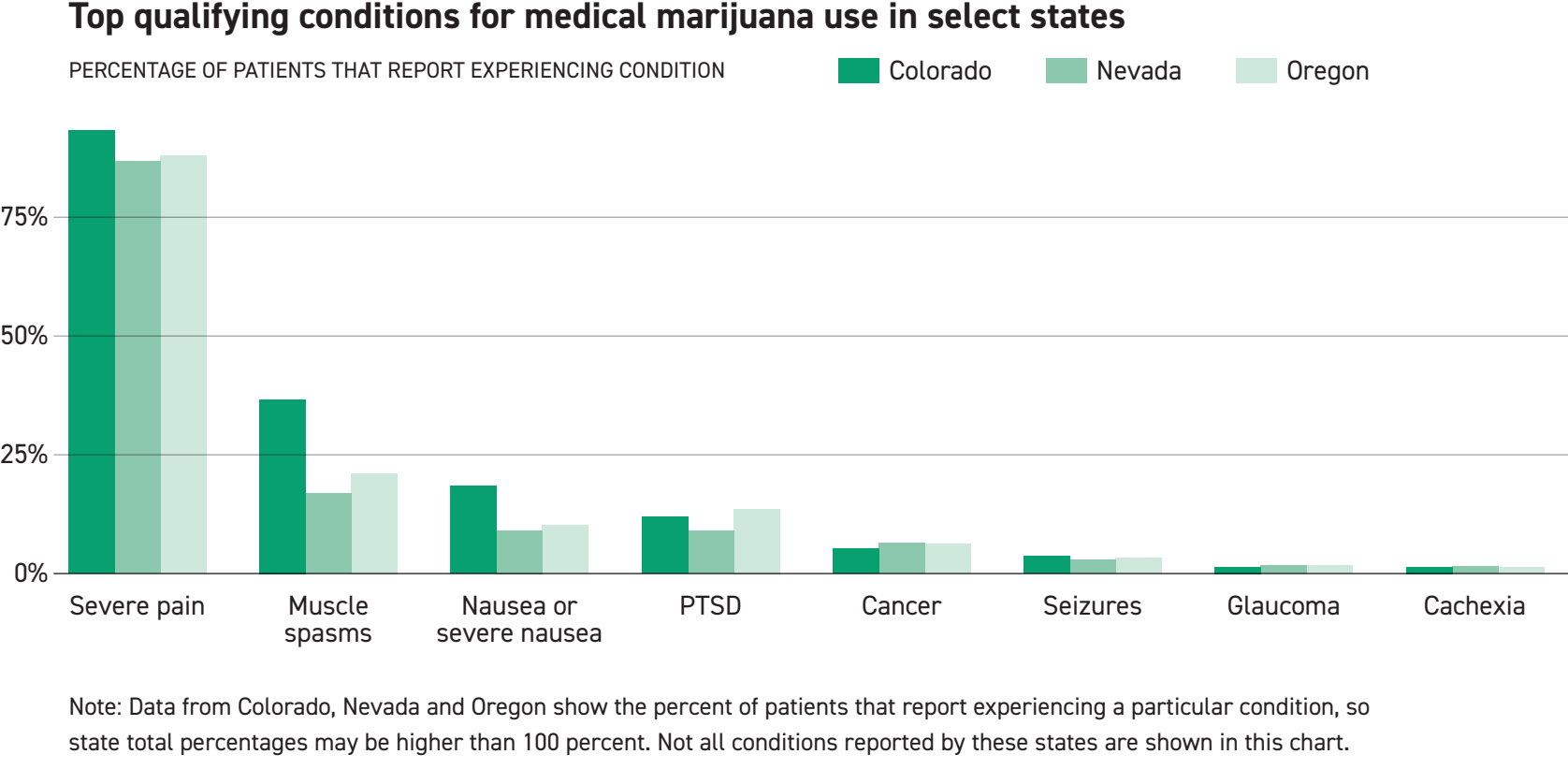
Available data from 26 states show at least 2 million Americans are registered medical marijuana users, though the number is likely much higher given that a total of 47 states have provided various legal pathways to some form of medical marijuana or CBD. Some states, like California, don't require medical marijuana users to register. States with the highest per capita use include Oklahoma and New Mexico.



Many patients use medical marijuana to treat severe pain, but more research is needed to understand full effects

Federal prohibition limits what is currently known about medical marijuana. To conduct federally-sanctioned research on marijuana, researchers have historically been required to use stock from the University of Mississippi. Some researchers have criticized the quality of the university's supply. A recently FDA-approved study at Yale University will be allowed to use medical marijuana from Connecticut's cannabis program, a rare exception.

The Mayo Clinic reports research has shown marijuana may treat or temporarily improve conditions like glaucoma and side effects of cancer treatment. Clinical trials have found CBD, a compound in marijuana, helps treat certain types of epilepsy. Other research indicates another compound, THC, is effective in treating symptoms like nausea. That means patients in limited access states, which often set THC limits, may not find relief from available medical marijuana.



Most states have comprehensive medical marijuana laws

States can broadly be categorized as having "comprehensive" and "limited-access" medical marijuana laws. Comprehensive laws generally have an extensive range of qualifying conditions and allow patients to take medical marijuana in a variety of formats. Limited-access laws, however, might only apply to one or two qualifying conditions and set stricter limits on consumption. Some limited-access laws protect the use of medical marijuana with an affirmative defense, which provides medical marijuana users a legal justification for use.

The regulatory debate about medical cannabis often concerns two compounds: THC and CBD. THC is a psychoactive, anti-inflammatory and analgesic compound in marijuana. CBD is a non-psychoactive compound in marijuana that may have significant medical value. Some limited access laws set minimum CBD content requirements and may also set a maximum THC limit.

