

RESOLUTION

Subject: Support for Increased Research and Regulations for the Sale of Kratom

Submitted by: Margo Nelis (University of Kentucky College of Medicine, Northern Kentucky), Michael Nichols (University of Kentucky College of Medicine, Northern Kentucky), Armin Razavi (University of Kentucky College of Medicine, Northern Kentucky), Maggie Stull (University of Kentucky College of Medicine)

Referred to: Reference Committee

.....
WHEREAS, *Mitragyna Speciosa*, commonly known as Kratom, is an herb that is categorized as a botanic dietary supplement, with opioid and stimulant- like properties that is sold over the counter in gas stations, smoke shops, and online²; and

WHEREAS, there are no approved uses for Kratom by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, however people report self-medicating with Kratom to manage drug withdrawal symptoms, depression, anxiety, and pain⁴; and

WHEREAS, Kratom has been gaining widespread popularity due to ease of availability and perceived benefits⁵; and

WHEREAS, Kratom is not controlled under the Food and Drug Administration and there are growing concerns for the purity of the herb sold in the retail space, such as contamination with heavy metals and bacteria⁴; and

WHEREAS, the Drug Enforcement Administration has listed Kratom as a “drug of concern”¹; and

WHEREAS, a study of overdoses in the United States identified Kratom to be a cause of death for 91 of the 152 Kratom- positive decedents, including seven who only tested positive for Kratom on toxicology²; and

WHEREAS, addiction is a critical public health and safety issue in Kentucky, resulting in 2,250 deaths from overdoses in 2021⁶; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky has the fourth highest overdose death rate in the country, with 55.6 deaths per 100,000 persons⁷; and

WHEREAS, the opioid and stimulant properties of Kratom make it an option for treating opioid withdrawal, but subsequently comes with risk for abuse, addiction, and overdose⁵; and

WHEREAS, Kratom is currently legal to buy, sell, and own in Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, Kratom is currently illegal to buy, sell, possess or use in 6 states including Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin¹; and

WHEREAS, the National Institute of Drug Abuse suggests increased research on Kratom related to safety and efficacy before its medicinal uses can be determined⁴; and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association “supports legislative or regulatory efforts to prohibit the sale or distribution of Kratom in the US which do not inhibit proper scientific research”³; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that KMA supports increased research on the safety and efficacy of Kratom; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA supports increased regulation on the sale and purchase of Kratom.

References:

- 1 Six States Ban Kratom over Concerns about Addiction Potential. *Partnership to End Addiction*. Published online May 2016. <https://drugfree.org/drug-and-alcohol-news/six-states-ban-kratom-concerns-addiction-potential/>
- 2 Olson E PhD, O'Donnell J PhD, Mattson C PhD, Schier J MD, Wilson N PhD. Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths with Kratom Detected — 27 States, July 2016– December 2017. *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*. Published online April 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6814a2.htm>
- 3 Kratom and its Growing Use Within the United States H-95.934. *American Medical Association*. Published online 2016. <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/kratom?uri=%2FAMADoc%2FHOD-95.934.xml>
- 4 Kratom. *National Institute on Drug Abuse*. Published online March 2022. <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/kratom#safe>
- 5 Patel P, Aknouk M, Keating S, et al. Cheating Death: A Rare Case Presentation of Kratom Toxicity. *Cureus*. 2021;13(7):e16582. Published 2021 Jul 23. doi:10.7759/cureus.16582
- 6 2021 Overdose Fatality Report. *Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy*. [https://odcp.ky.gov/Reports/2021%20Overdose%20Fatality%20Report%20\(final\).pdf](https://odcp.ky.gov/Reports/2021%20Overdose%20Fatality%20Report%20(final).pdf)
- 7 Drug Overdose Mortality by State. *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/drug_poisoning_mortality/drug_poisoning.htm