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of
Milwaukee

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PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

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Synthetic Cannabinoids Cases Confirmed in Milwaukee

The use of "K2" can cause severe bleeding and possibly death

(Milwaukee, WI) – The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) is warning the public that synthetic marijuana cases have been confirmed in Milwaukee. Since April 19, 2018, two confirmed cases and one probable case of the illness have been identified in City residents. Of the three cases, two have required hospitalization.

Synthetic Cannabinoids can cause severe bleeding, unexplained bruising and possibly death. Other known names for Synthetic Marijuana include K2, spice, fake weed, Black Mamba, Green Giant, Bombay Blue, Genie, and Zohai. The packaging and name of the products may vary.

The products can be found in convenience stores, gas stations, drug paraphernalia shops, novelty stores, and online. K2 consists of a lot different mind-altering chemicals that are made and sprayed on dried plant material or sold as liquids to be inhaled in products like e-cigarettes or other vaping devices. They are sold for recreational drug use with claims they will provide the user the effects of cannabis. These products are also known as herbal or liquid incense. **If anyone has purchased these products recently, they should not use them.** The products are marketed as a safe alternative to marijuana, but they are not safe and may affect the brain much more powerfully than marijuana. The effects of the products can be unpredictable and possibly deadly.

The use of synthetic cannabinoids has become a serious public health problem. This is due in part to the products being easy to access and some believing it is not harmful because it is "natural."

MHD encourages people to **call 911 or immediately to go an emergency room if they or someone they know are experiencing a serious reaction to synthetic cannabinoids.**

With Milwaukee's proximity and connectivity to Chicago, it is important to know that since April 19, 2018 there have been over 30 confirmed cases in Chicago. Also, there have been three reported deaths from the outbreak in Illinois.

The Wisconsin Division of Public Health along with MHD continue increased surveillance for additional cases, urging health care providers to report anyone presenting with a serious reaction to synthetic cannabinoids to their local health department. Specifically, in the City of Milwaukee cases can be reported to SurNet by calling 414-286-3624 during business hours or after hours at 414-286-2150.

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