



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Wolf Administration Opioid Command Center Issues Alert Regarding Synthetic Drugs, Including K2**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Wolf Administration today issued a warning for all Pennsylvanians about the influx of synthetic drugs into the state, including synthetic fentanyl and K2, and the lethal risks associated with them.

“It’s absolutely essential that emergency responders, law enforcement and family members and friends of individuals with substance use disorder educate themselves about these drugs and to avoid contact with them.” Governor Wolf said.

At an event in the Capitol Media Center today, Wolf Administration officials from the departments of Health and Drug and Alcohol Programs, and the Pennsylvania State Police advised that if you encounter someone suffering from an accidental overdose, make sure you take precautions, including wearing gloves, and call for help. First responders should use appropriate personal protective equipment when encountering patients suffering from known or suspected synthetic drug overdoses.

Residents can call 1-800-222-1222, the Poison help line, to speak with the experts at their local poison center about synthetic fentanyl and marijuana. Health care providers with questions should consult with their poison center about the management of their patients.

“K2 is not marijuana and it is dangerous,” Secretary of Drug and Alcohol Programs Jennifer Smith said. “It is a man-made, mind-altering chemical made to mirror marijuana’s effects. There is an important distinction to be made between synthetic drugs, like fentanyl substances and K2, and prescribed fentanyl or medical marijuana. Synthetic drugs can be deadly – prescribed fentanyl and medical marijuana should only be used under the care of a physician.”

K2 can produce health effects such as:

- Altered awareness of surroundings;
- Delusional or disordered thinking;
- Violent behavior;
- Anxiety;
- Confusion;
- Rapid heart rate;

- Nausea and vomiting;
- Seizures;
- Paranoia;
- Hallucinations and psychotic episodes; and
- Suicidal thoughts.

“We simply do not know what is in many of these compounds being sold on the street as fentanyl and marijuana, making treatment difficult,” Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. “Personal protective measures are essential for first responders and health professionals treating patients suspected of using these chemicals.”

In March, the Wolf Administration reclassified synthetic fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I drugs, making them illegal substances.

As one of the original initiatives of Governor Wolf’s disaster declaration, scheduling synthetic fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I drugs follows similar steps federally to classify fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I drugs by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration on December 29, 2017. Schedule I substances are those that are considered the most dangerous and carry a high potential for abuse and addiction.

On January 10, Governor Wolf signed a statewide disaster declaration for the opioid epidemic to enhance state response, increase access to treatment, and save lives. It is in its third 90-day renewal.

For more information on the state’s efforts to battle the opioid epidemic, visit <https://www.pa.gov/guides/opioid-epidemic/> or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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