



## Buncombe County Health and Human Services

Aging and Veteran's Services ~ Social Work Services  
Public Assistance & Work Support Strategies ~ Public Health  
Stoney Blevins  
Health and Human Services Director

**To:** Buncombe County Medical Providers  
**From:** Dr. Jennifer Mullendore, Medical Director  
**Date:** July 31, 2018  
**RE:** Health Alert from Buncombe County Department of Health- Life-threatening coagulopathy associated with the use of synthetic cannabinoids.

Please see the attached Provider Memo regarding **life-threatening coagulopathy associated with the use of synthetic cannabinoids**. The attached CDC Health Advisory contains additional information and recommendations.

Three cases of vitamin K-dependent coagulopathy in patients who reported using synthetic cannabinoids have been reported to the NC Division of Public Health (DPH) since June 2018. There is currently a multistate outbreak of severe coagulopathy associated with synthetic cannabinoids use. As of July 13, 2018, 11 states had reported at least 250 cases, including 6 deaths, to the CDC. Brodifacoum, a long-acting vitamin K-dependent antagonist that is used as rat poison, has been detected in case-patients' drugs and biological samples.

**Patients with Vitamin K-dependent coagulopathy may first present to primary care providers, emergency departments, or urgent care clinics with any these symptoms: bruising, nosebleeds, excessively heavy menstrual bleeding, hematemesis, hemoptysis, hematuria, flank pain, abdominal pain, and bleeding gums or mouth.**

### Recommendations for clinicians

- **If a patient presents with signs or symptoms consistent with Vitamin-K dependent coagulopathy:**
  1. **Contact the Carolinas Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 to report the case and discuss the treatment and management of the patient.**
  2. **Ask the patient if they have used synthetic cannabinoids within the last 3 months. Other names include K2, Spice, synthetic marijuana, and fake weed/legal weed.**
- **Even in the absence of signs and symptoms of coagulopathy, if the patient reports synthetic cannabinoids use or you suspect use, check the patient's INR before releasing them.**

### Reporting

- **To report any similar cases, or if you have questions about treatment and management of these cases, please contact the Carolinas Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.**
- If you have questions about the ongoing outbreak, please contact the NC DPH at 919-695-2662.

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HHS Administration p. 828.250.5700 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7408 Asheville, NC 28802	Aging & Veteran's Services p. 828.250.5726 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7408 Asheville, NC 28802	Social Work Services p. 828.250.5500 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7408 Asheville, NC 28802	Public Assistance p. 828.250.5500 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7408 Asheville, NC 28802	Public Health p. 828.250.5000 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7407 Asheville, NC 28802
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