WellLink™ | Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium

January 28, 2026

Ohio Board of Pharmacy
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Support for Classification of Kratom and Synthetic Kratom Compounds as Schedule I Controlled Substances & Support for Research on Safety and Therapeutic Use

Dear Members of the Ohio Board of Pharmacy:

On behalf of the Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium, we write to express our support for the classification of kratom and any synthetic kratom compounds, including mitragynine-related substances, as Schedule I controlled substances under Ohio law. We also urge the Board to support and enable rigorous scientific research and clinical trials to determine whether kratom or its derivatives may have safe and effective medical uses under controlled conditions.

Kratom (derived from the plant *Mitragyna speciosa*) and its primary alkaloids, including mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), have come under increasing scrutiny due to their opioid-like effects and association with adverse outcomes. Although kratom has been marketed and used by some for purported benefits such as pain relief or managing withdrawal symptoms, there is currently no drug product containing kratom or its compounds that has received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for any medical indication. Moreover, adverse health events, including seizures, psychosis, and deaths, have been reported in association with kratom use, particularly with concentrated or synthetic derivatives.

Given these concerns, the Ohio Board of Pharmacy recently issued an emergency scheduling rule under Ohio Administrative Code Rule 4729:9-1-01.1, which classifies mitragynine-related compounds, including synthetic alkaloids like 7-OH and mitragynine pseudoindoxyl, as Schedule I controlled substances. This action reflects a precautionary approach in light of the absence of accepted medical use and the public health risks posed by these substances.

The Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium, dedicated to reducing opioid misuse, overdose, and related harms across Northeast Ohio, supports this scheduling because it aligns with our mission to protect residents from substances that pose significant risk yet lack demonstrated medical utility. Controlling kratom and its potent derivatives as Schedule I will help prevent unregulated access and reduce the risk of misuse, dependency, and overdose among Ohioans.

At the same time, we recognize that some individuals and clinicians advocate for further exploration of kratom's potential therapeutic effects. We encourage the Board and policymakers to work with academic institutions, research bodies, and regulatory agencies to establish appropriate pathways that enable ethical, scientifically sound research, including necessary approvals from state and federal controlled substances authorities.

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In closing, the Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium:

1. Supports the classification of kratom and all synthetic kratom-related compounds as Schedule I controlled substances in Ohio to protect public health; and
2. Supports the advancement of controlled research and clinical trials to evaluate safety and efficacy in defined therapeutic contexts.

Thank you for your consideration of these important public health issues. We stand ready to assist the Board in its efforts to promote health and safety for all Ohioans. If you require additional information, please contact Jodi Mitchell, jodi.mitchell@mywelllink.com.

Respectfully,

Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium Advisory Committee

Jennifer Johns, The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO)
Dr. Jeanne Lackamp, University Hospitals
Thom Olmstead, Sisters of Charity Health System
Dr. Joan Papp, The MetroHealth System
Dr. Ted Parran, Rosary Hall, St. Vincent Charity Community Health Center
Dr. David Streem, Cleveland Clinic
Daniel Lettenberger-Klein, WellLink Health Alliance