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MEMORANDUM

To: Illinois Dental Practices and Local Health Department Administrators
From: Communicable Disease Control Section
Date: April 5, 2018
Re: Investigation of Severe Bleeding among Synthetic Cannabinoids ('K2/Spice') Users

Where possible, local health departments should share this memo with dental practices in your jurisdiction.

Since March 7, 2018, 89 cases of severe bleeding have been reported to IDPH in persons who report using synthetic cannabinoids, also known as K2, synthetic marijuana, fake weed/legal weed, spice, genie, etc., prior to their illness. Clinical signs include bruising, nosebleeds, **bleeding of the gums**, bleeding out of proportion to the level of injury, vomiting blood, blood in urine or stool, excessively heavy menstrual bleeding, and back pain. Cases have been found to have elevated INR values, and laboratory tests for several cases confirm exposure to a long-acting vitamin K antagonist, brodifacoum. Patients have been reported in the following jurisdictions: Chicago, Cook, DuPage, Fulton, Kane, Kankakee, Mason, McLean, Peoria, Tazewell, and Will. Daily case counts, geographic distribution of cases, and other updates can be found at the [IDPH website](#).

All of the cases have required prolonged hospitalization due to elevated INR values despite fresh frozen plasma (FFP) and intravenous vitamin K, and are requiring oral vitamin K at time of discharge to appropriately manage INR levels. An investigation of this outbreak is currently ongoing.

Patients who have used synthetic cannabinoids may have complications or experience excessive bleeding after tooth extraction and other dental procedures. Should your institution encounter patients with significant bleeding without definitive etiologies (*e.g.*, taking warfarin or overdose of rat poison), **please refer them to an emergency clinic or hospital. Further, your facility may consider screening patients for synthetic cannabinoid use or recent unexplained bleeding, especially if you are in a region with recent cases.**

Hospitals in the state have been notified of the situation. Suspect cases should be reported to your local health department (LHD). If the LHD is not available, please notify the Illinois Department of Public Health at 217-782-2016 or 1-800-782-7860 after business hours.