

Regional Advisory Board (RAB) of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions

January 2020 Newsletter

Did you Know:

Congress Approves Raising Age to 21 for E-Cigarette and Tobacco Sales: Sales of tobacco products to anyone under 21 are now banned under a year-end congressional spending bill. The measure, which would include cigarettes and e-cigarettes, has bipartisan support. Industry advocates support this bill because it will spare the industry from further restrictions, like banning flavored products, but health advocates are concerned it will not do enough to reduce e-cigarette use in minors. (ASAM Weekly, 12/24/19)

Analysis finds increase in mid-life mortality: While U.S. life expectancy has generally increased over the last 60 years, that rate took a turn in 2014 and began to decrease. A major contributor to that change was an increase in specific death causes, including drug overdoses and suicide, among young and middle age adults. Those mortality rate increases have been especially large in New England and the Ohio Valley, including Indiana. In Indiana, the midlife mortality rate increased 14.8 percent from 2014-2017, meaning there were more deaths among 25- to 64-year-olds in 2017 than 2014, largely due to growing numbers of drug overdoses, suicides and certain organ system diseases. (Indiana State Department of Health, 12/17/19)

The FDA issued a statement about CBD. Key points include:

FDA has approved only one CBD product, Epidiolex, to treat two rare forms of epilepsy. Adding CBD to food or labeling it as a dietary supplement is illegal. Limited data about CBD's safety point to real risks. Some CBD products are being marketed with unproven medical claims and are of unknown quality.

1. CBD can harm you even before you become aware of it.
 - CBD can cause liver injury.
 - CBD can interfere other drugs, causing serious side effects.
 - CBD used with alcohol or other depressants increases the risk of sedation and drowsiness, which can lead to injuries.
2. CBD can cause side effects that should improve when use stops or is reduced.
 - Drowsiness or sleepiness.
 - Diarrhea and/or decreased appetite.
 - Mood changes such as irritability and agitation.
3. There is much about CBD not yet known, such as:
 - What happens if you take CBD daily long-term?
 - What effect does CBD have on the developing brain?
 - How does CBD affect the developing fetus or breastfed newborn?
 - How does CBD interact with herbs and botanicals?
 - Does CBD cause male reproductive toxicity in humans, as it does in studies of animals? (The Marijuana Report,12/4/19)

Kratom

Use of kratom, a psychoactive plant that grows naturally in Southeast Asian countries, is becoming increasingly popular despite its potential for addiction. "What we're seeing is regular use of it, especially in adolescents and young adults," said Dr. Martin Seppala, Chief Medical Officer at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. "It fits in with alcohol, marijuana and tobacco. It's legal, so it's really easy for kids to get a hold of, and they'll try it to see what it does to them." Kratom is legal in most states, and is available in many convenience stores, gas stations and head shops. In September, the FDA warned consumers not to use kratom. There are no FDA-approved uses for kratom, and the FDA said it is concerned that kratom, which affects the same opioid brain receptors as morphine, appears to expose people to the risks of addiction, abuse and dependence. (drugfree.org, 12/7/19)

Other facts include:

- It can be in a powder, pill or liquid form.
- In low doses, kratom users report feeling increased energy, sociability and alertness, and in higher doses, they claim it acts as a sedative and pain reliever.
- However, the National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that the substance can cause addiction, withdrawal symptoms and unpleasant side effects like loss of appetite, seizures and hallucinations.
- Most advocates say kratom is an all-natural pain reliever akin to opioids, but without the risk of overdose and addiction. Many people also claim to have used kratom as a substitute for illegal narcotics while they weaned themselves off drugs.
- "A lot of people are using it as a substitute when they can't find heroin or other drugs," said Dustin Perry, director of medication assisted treatment specialty services at Baptist's Lakeview Center. "Most people will use it briefly, then come back to using opiates because it doesn't quite satisfy that itch. And there's no treatment involved with it." Perry said that perhaps a bigger problem is that because kratom is legal and widely available, it gives the product an unwarranted air of safety and legitimacy.
- Between 2011 and 2017, there were 11 deaths associated with kratom exposure — nine involving kratom plus other drugs and medicines, and two involving just kratom, according to the National Institute for Drug Abuse.
- In 2017, the FDA identified at least 44 deaths related to kratom, with at least one case investigated as possible use of pure kratom. The FDA report noted that many of the kratom-associated deaths appeared to have resulted from adulterated products or taking kratom with other potent substances.
- Seppala, the addiction doctor, issued a word of caution to people thinking of turning to kratom. "I'd tell them this is not well-studied, it does cause intoxication, it's just as dangerous as the illegal substances. People think it must be safe because it's legal, and that's not necessarily true." (Detroit Free Press, 12/7/19)



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