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NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

Congress agrees to add synthetic drugs to Controlled Substances Act

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“K2” and “Spice” would permanently appear on Schedule I.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) commended House and Senate negotiators for agreeing on legislation to control 26 synthetic drugs under the Controlled Substances Act.

These drugs include those commonly found in products marketed as "K2" and "Spice."

The addition of these chemicals to Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act will be included as part of S. 3187, the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act. Schedule I substances are those with a high potential for abuse; have no medical use in treatment in the United States; and lack an accepted safety for use of the drug.

In addition to scheduling the 26 drugs, the new law would double the length of time a substance may be temporarily placed in Schedule I (from 18 to 36 months). In addition to explicitly naming 26 substances, the legislation creates a new definition for "cannabamimetic agents," creating criteria by which similar chemical compounds are controlled.

In recent years, a growing number of dangerous products have been introduced into the U.S. marketplace. Products labeled as "herbal incense" have become especially popular, especially among teens and young adults.

These products consist of plant material laced with synthetic cannabinoids which, when smoked, mimic the delirious effects of THC, the psychoactive ingredient of marijuana. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, more than 100 such substances have been synthesized and identified to date. DEA has used its emergency scheduling authority to place in Schedule I several of these harmful chemicals.

Newly developed drugs, particularly from the "2C family" (dimethoxyphenethylamines), are generally referred to as synthetic psychedelic/hallucinogens. 2C-E caused the recent death of a 19 year-old in Minnesota.

The substances added to Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act also include 9 different 2C chemicals, and 15 different synthetic cannabanoids.