

## Synthetic Drug Packages with Cartoon Character Attract Kids, Minister Warns

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Synthetic drug packages featuring Scooby Doo are attracting youth in the Baltimore area, warns a local minister.

He is trying to get these “Scooby Snax” out of the hands of the city’s young people.

Cortly “C.D.” Witherspoon notes a sticker on the package says the contents have a blueberry flavor, although the packages contains dried herbs, not candy.

He is concerned that young people are using the product to get high. Although President Obama signed legislation this summer that bans synthetic drugs, federal officials say the new law is difficult to enforce, because of limited resources. Maryland does not have a law banning synthetic marijuana.

Synthetic drug packages are found in many gas stations and small neighborhood stores, *The Baltimore Sun* reports.

The newspaper found a series of YouTube videos of teens and young adults smoking Scooby Snax, while talking about the product’s effects.

Maryland Health Secretary Dr. Joshua Sharfstein said people may think synthetic drugs are safe because they are easily available. “Just because something is sold at a gas station does not mean it is safe for kids,” Sharfstein told the newspaper. “Synthetics have been linked to some very serious side effects: catatonia, seizures, hallucinations.”

He unsuccessfully lobbied the state legislature earlier this year to impose a statewide ban on synthetic marijuana. He praised the federal law, which not only bans chemicals known to mimic marijuana, but also their chemical analogs. This makes it more difficult for drug makers to slightly alter their product to evade the law.

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