



City Council
Health & Human Services
Committee Meeting

36 Court Street
Springfield, MA 01103

<http://www.springfieldcityhall.com>

Councilor Brian Santaniello
(Chair)

~Final~

November 17,
2025

1:30 PM

City Hall - Room 200

Call To Order

1:30 PM Meeting called to order on November 17, 2025, in Hybrid Room 200, 36 Court Street, Springfield, MA 01103.

Roll Call

In Person: Sean Curran, Brian Santaniello, Ken Shea, Helen Caulton, Janet DeForge (Republican News), Steve Buonoconti.

Zoom: Michael White, MD, Thomas Moore, Maria Perez, Victor Davila, Misty Brown, Lora Romney, Jennifer Healy, Jan Stevens, Shane Maciel, Allison Smith, Shannon (Global Kratom Coalition), Christopher Deane (Organic Botanicals).

Public Portion

1. Amending Chapter 275 to include a new Article V: Prohibiting the Manufacture Sale and Distribution of Kratom

Minutes

Topic: Kratom Regulation, Product Safety, and Public Health Considerations

Purpose: Review risks associated with kratom and synthetic 7OH products and discuss potential ordinance revisions.

Call to Order

The meeting was convened to address growing public health concerns related to kratom products available in Springfield, with an emphasis on distinguishing natural leaf kratom from synthetic or concentrated forms.

Presentations and Discussion

Expert Testimony

Dr. Michael White, a clinical pharmacologist, provided an overview of kratom's effects and regulatory status. He noted its similarity to opioid substances, its unapproved status by the FDA, and potential risks, particularly to younger populations.

Dr. White presented on the evolution of kratom products, explaining the shift from natural leaf kratom to isolated alkaloid products, especially those containing 7-hydroxymitragynine (7OH). He emphasized that natural leaf forms may provide some harm-reduction benefits, while concentrated or synthetic products significantly increase addiction and overdose risks.

Safety Concerns

Dr. White reported that although six deaths have been formally documented from 7OH products, the actual number is likely higher due to inadequate toxicology screening. He shared a case involving severe addiction and suicide tied to 7OH use. He noted that 7OH products show respiratory depression similar to opioids, while natural kratom leaf does not typically produce such effects.

Public Health and Opioid Risk Context

The committee discussed the broader opioid landscape. While kratom can produce opioid-like effects, it is less potent than fentanyl. However, individuals transitioning from kratom to injectable opioids face increased risks of infection, HIV, hepatitis, and overdose.

Regulatory Recommendations

Dr. White recommended banning synthetic or high-potency kratom products, including:

- Products containing more than 2% 7OH
- Mitragynine pseudo-endoxyl
- MGM15/16

He advised that natural leaf kratom could remain legal with restrictions such as age limits, pre-registration requirements, and mandatory product testing and labeling. The committee considered incorporating these distinctions into ordinance language.

Committee Actions and Discussion

Attorney Moore presented the current draft ordinance for review. Committee members discussed the need to differentiate natural leaf kratom from enhanced or synthetic products clearly and recognized the importance of updated definitions and testing requirements.

The committee acknowledged the urgency of establishing protective regulations while ensuring access to safer, natural kratom products.

Next Steps

- **Dr. White:** Submit model ordinance language and KCAC recommendations to assist with revising definitions of banned and regulated kratom products.
- **Attorney Ken Shea / Committee:** Redraft the ordinance section defining kratom product categories and associated restrictions.
- **Helen Carlton-Harris:** Advance the ordinance to the Public Health Council for review by physicians and nurses and provide recommendations to the Mayor.
- **Committee:** Consider inviting Dr. White to a future Public Health Council session for expert Q&A.
- **City Council Committee:** Continue discussion at 7 p.m. City Council Chambers meeting to refine ordinance language.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded with agreement to continue ordinance development and public health review at the next scheduled council session.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]