



NEWS RELEASE

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April 23, 2018

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IDPH Receives Massive Donation For Synthetic Cannabinoids Treatment

The Bausch Foundation and Valeant donate Vitamin K

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has been working with the Bausch Foundation, the independent charitable organization of Valeant Pharmaceuticals International, Inc. (Valeant) to secure a donation of nearly 800,000 tablets of vitamin K. The tablets will provide treatment for people who have suffered severe bleeding after using synthetic cannabinoids (spice, K2, etc.) laced with rat poison. A chemical found in rat poison, brodifacoum, prevents blood from clotting, resulting in severe bleeding. High doses of vitamin K taken over several months can help restore the blood's ability to clot.

“Governor Bruce Rauner and IDPH would like to thank the Bausch Foundation and Valeant for this significant donation of vitamin K to IDPH. This medicine will be used to treat people who suffer severe bleeding from using tainted synthetic cannabinoids,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “These individuals will need to take up to 30 tablets a day for up to six months, which could cost several thousands of dollars. This donation will allow every individual who has experienced severe bleeding, as well as any future cases, to receive lifesaving treatment free of charge.”

More than 140 people in Illinois, including three deaths, have been sickened by the synthetic cannabinoids. Symptoms include coughing up blood, blood in the urine, severe bloody nose, bleeding gums, and/or internal bleeding.

“I’m proud that the Bausch Foundation was able to respond to a call for help by arranging to donate this needed medicine, and we appreciate the efforts of the Illinois Department of Public Health, which will ensure the medicine is quickly provided to the patients who need it,” said Joseph C. Papa, chairman and CEO of Valeant, and chairman of the Board of the Bausch Foundation.

As soon as IDPH identified that the severe bleeding was caused by rat poison, IDPH began working on access to treatment. Because of the large amount of vitamin K needed, the long duration of treatment, and costs up to thousands of dollars per patient, IDPH started discussions with key stakeholders to find a solution with no financial burden.

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Synthetic cannabinoids are human-made, mind-altering chemicals that are sprayed on to dried plant material. These chemicals are called cannabinoids because they act on the same brain cell receptors as the main active ingredient in [marijuana](#). The health effects from using synthetic cannabinoids can be unpredictable, harmful, and deadly.

If you have purchased any synthetic cannabinoids, do not use them. If you have used these drugs and have severe, unexplained bleeding or bruising, have someone take you to the hospital immediately or call 911. Do not walk or drive yourself.

More information is available at <http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/medical-cannabis/synthetic-cannabinoids>.

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