

Ulster County Legislature

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Ulster County Officials Warn About the Dangers of Kratom Use, Including Concentrates and Synthetic Variants, And Take Action To Ban The Sale In Ulster County

Kingston, NY — As kratom continues to gain popularity as an herbal supplement marketed for pain relief, mood enhancement, and energy boost, elected representatives and health officials in Ulster County are increasingly concerned by the associated risks and potential dangers.

Kratom, derived from the leaves of the *Mitragyna speciosa* tree native to Southeast Asia, contains active compounds that interact with opioid receptors in the brain. A growing number of studies and reports are highlighting the serious health concerns related to synthetic and highly concentrated natural kratom, prompting calls for greater awareness and regulatory action.

The Ulster County Legislature is currently reviewing Proposed Local Law Number 16 of 2026 which seeks to prohibit the sale and distribution of concentrated and synthetic 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) Kratom products in Ulster County.

“Though selling to persons under age 21 is unlawful in the New York State, kratom is readily available to the public in convenience stores and gas stations and easily falls into the hands of our youth via online and illicit sales,” according to **Legislator William Murray (District 20)**, author of the legislation.

For youth in Ulster County, kratom presents unique challenges because their developing brains make them more vulnerable to addiction and mental health issues.

Kratom concentrates and synthetics pose significant dangers, including potential addiction akin to opioids, with withdrawal symptoms including anxiety and insomnia. Adverse health effects can range from nausea and constipation to severe respiratory depression.

The lack of regulation leads to inconsistent concentrations and heightened overdose risks. Synthetic kratom introduces further risks due to increased potency and unknown additives that compromise safety. Misleading marketing as a “natural” alternative causes users to underestimate its dangers.

“The rapid emergence of these products complicates regulatory oversight and raises the potential for misuse and dependency,” **Legislator Murray** stated. “Dutchess and Sullivan Counties have recently enacted kratom bans. These bans could potentially bring more buyers into Ulster County,” he added.

Health experts in Ulster County urge consumers, parents, and educators to exercise caution and to educate youth about the potential dangers of natural, concentrated and synthetic kratom. As kratom use rises, particularly among youth in Ulster County, so do the risks associated with its consumption, especially with the introduction of synthetic variants. It is imperative that consumers are fully informed about the potential dangers before considering kratom as a remedy for any condition.

“Ulster County needs to immediately ban the sale and distribution of high concentrations and synthetic kratom while we await action at the state and federal level. Its addictive nature and misleading marketing and misinformation campaigns cannot be allowed to continue to harm Ulster County residents and youth,” concluded **Legislator Murray**.

New York State Senate Bill S8925 (Ryan) and Assembly Bill A9156 (Steck) are awaiting the Governor’s signature. The Ulster County Legislature will further advocate for the Governor’s immediate signature.

Full text of Ulster County Proposed Local Law Number 16 of 2026 can be found [HERE](#).

Those struggling with substance use issues are encouraged to contact the [Ulster County Crisis Support Center](#). Walk-ins welcome at the Center for Wellbeing, 368 Broadway, 1st Floor, Kingston. No appointment or referral necessary. For immediate needs or emergencies, call or text 988.

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