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Attorney General, Pharmacy Board Announce Proposed Rule Banning New Synthetic Drugs

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) -- Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and Ohio State Board of Pharmacy Executive Director Kyle Parker announced today that a proposed administrative rule will be presented to Ohio Governor John Kasich and the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) in an effort to quickly ban new chemical compounds being abused as synthetic drugs.

If approved, the rule would allow the Ohio State Board of Pharmacy to classify the new chemical compounds, and any future compounds with a similar chemical structure, as schedule one drugs.

"We commend all the efforts and assistance from the Ohio State Board of Pharmacy to protect the health and safety of Ohio's families in this fight against synthetic narcotics," said Ohio Attorney General DeWine. "In the past, criminal chemists have been able to bypass Ohio's laws by slightly modifying the chemical compounds of banned synthetic drugs, but this new rule will also ban future alterations."

"This is an excellent example of what extra-ordinary work can be accomplished when two agencies work together to combat a public health crisis," said Ohio State Board of Pharmacy Executive Director Kyle Parker. "We look forward to continuing this partnership and including even more government agencies and officials to make Ohio a safer and better place."

In June, Attorney General DeWine and Executive Director Parker announced the partnership between their agencies in an effort to speed up the process to ban newly created synthetic drugs. Under Ohio law, the Ohio State Board of Pharmacy has the authority to classify compounds as controlled substances through the administrative rule process if the substances have a high potential for abuse. This process eliminates the need to go through the legislature each time a new synthetic drug is created.

The Ohio State Board of Pharmacy approved the proposal to create a new administrative rule after those with the Attorney General's Office briefed them on several new synthetic drugs being submitted by local law enforcement agencies to the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Laboratory.

Specifically, the proposed rule will ban PB-22 and 5F-PB-22, drugs that began surfacing in

the first five months of 2013, directly following the passage of House Bill 334 in December 2012. House Bill 334 banned all synthetic drugs that existed at that time.

The board concluded that the new chemical compounds have a high potential for abuse, have no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States, and lack accepted safety for use even under medical supervision.

Based on those findings, the board will present the proposed administrative rule to Governor Kasich for emergency signature. If the Governor signs the rule, it would be enacted for 90 days, pending a public comment period and final approval by JCARR.

Documented symptoms of synthetic drug use include agitation, paranoia, confusion, violence, convulsions, unconsciousness, lethargy, nervousness, erratic behavior, driving as if intoxicated, inability to stand, and slurred speech.

Attorney General DeWine has made the fight against synthetic drugs a priority in Ohio, filing multiple consumer protection lawsuits against business owners selling the drugs as legal products. He has also filed nuisance abatement action against those businesses, resulting in the temporary closure of three stores so far. The Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Special Prosecutions Section have also been actively involved in multiple synthetic drug criminal cases statewide.

