



**Department of Law – Board 272**  
***Controlled Substances Advisory Committee***

**Date:** Thursday, December 18, 2025, 09:00 AM

**Location:** Teleconference  
Host: Attorney General’s Office, 1031 W 4th Ave 5th Floor  
Conference Room, Anchorage, AK 99501

**Chairperson:** Sara Rasmussen (President of Board of Pharmacy Designee)

**Members in Attendance:** Robert Lawrence (Commissioner of Health Designee), Sola Olamikan (Physician), Timothy Putney (Peace Officer), Katholyn Runnels (Attorney General Designee), Natalie Velasquez (Psychiatrist)

**Experts in Attendance:** Sylvan Robb (Department of Commerce), Chuck Foster (Assistant Chief of Anchorage Crime Lab), Olivia Nolywaika (State Trooper), Betsy Douds-Paczan (President of Physicians Assistant Board), Kaci Schroeder (LAW), Carly Dennis (Senate Staff)

**Secretaries:** Sam Fisher (LAW), Elizabeth Tallmadge (LAW)

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**Agenda**

- I. Introductions
- II. Review of Committee Responsibilities
- III. New Substances Concerns
- IV. Old Business
- V. Anchorage Crime Lab Update
- VI. Legislative Concerns
- VII. New Business
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Next Steps
- X. Adjournment

## **I. Introductions**

Introductions conducted for committee members in attendance and experts presenting. Dr Sola Olamikan arrives 09:15.

## **II. Review of Committee Responsibilities**

Review of committee responsibilities as established in AS 11.71.110. No comments.

## **III. New Substances Concerns**

*PDMP update:* Alaska Prescription Drug Monitoring Program update from Sylvan Robb, director of the Division of Corporation's Business and Professional Licensing. PDMP monitors federally scheduled 2, 3, and 4 substances and is fully funded through federal grants. Providers with the ability to distribute those substances are required to register with PDMP, and PDMP has achieved 98% compliance with registration. PDMP has established *The Statewide Gateway* to streamline provider reporting. Per HB56 veterinarians have been removed from PDMP reporting requirements as of July 2023. The division established an Alaska chapter of The National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators – NADDI. Inter-state and military health system data-sharing. Noted that several states have legislation restricting the reporting of federally scheduled 3 drug testosterone and Alaska does not. 2025 Q3 Dashboard report provided. Chairperson Rasmussen asks for data concerning which conditions prescriptions were being issued, data was not immediately available, note made to circle back in Q1.

*Counterfeit synthetics:* update provided by Chuck Foster. Main counterfeit synthetic: M30 tablets – fentanyl.

## **IV. Old Business**

*Kratom – Gabapentin discussion:* review of issue provided by Katholyn Runnels. Great concern in western Alaska. Previous meeting unanimous vote to recommend kratom be scheduled as a schedule 3A controlled substance, and gabapentin to be scheduled as a schedule 5A controlled substance. Olivia Nolywaika, State Trooper currently with the Drug Enforcement Unit and former patrol trooper in Nome provides background and context for discussion. Kratom and gabapentin primarily received through mail and sent to outlying villages. Kratom 6kg – 30kg per day, all mailed from Las Vegas by Steven Harter. 1 Alaskan overdose death linked to kratom in Western Alaska. Kratom withdrawals identical to heroin withdrawals. Gabapentin 1000-3000 pills per day found in mail. Cheap and unscheduled, 12-13 year olds found using it. In 2025,

gabapentin contributing factor in 19 deaths. Runnels asks what law enforcement's ability is to prevent kratom and gabapentin distribution because it was unscheduled, to which Nolywaika responds there was no ability to prevent distribution because it isn't scheduled. Betsy Douds-Paczan notes that kratom over the counter is incredibly addictive, 13x greater than methadone, comparisons to heroin appropriate. Recounts kratom addiction is seen in her clinic and is life ruining, supports original decision to schedule and regulate. Notes kratom is banned in 7 states and 35 countries. The secretary of Health and Human Services is directing the FDA to recommend it be scheduled by DEA. Dr Robert Lawrence comments on terminology, that kratom is now a concentrated form of 7OH and is labeled as such, and this is the substance seen in Alaskan hospital admissions. He asks if Nolywaika is seeing 7OH or if it is the mixed product seen previously. Nolywaika can not confirm which concentration is being seen. Dr Lawrence reemphasizes this is currently unregulated at federal and state levels and is unable to be seized. Timothy Putney asks that if it were to become controlled, would it be detectable and how. Foster responds unsure if there are field tests available, the lab can detect active ingredients mitragynine and sega hydroxyzine, does not have ability to identify if something is kratom. Notes if it were to go into statute as a controlled substance, active ingredients would need to be listed. Runnels asks what quantities are needed for detection. Foster responds low to very low quantities. Runnels asks if form changes would affect testing. Foster responds yes, but testing still doable. No further comments.

Chairperson Rasmussen notes 2022 letter listed both kratom and gabapentin. Mixed feedback with gabapentin from board. Asks committee opinion for issue separation. Putney suggests gabapentin be rediscussed at next meeting and to move forward with kratom. Dr Lawrence supports discussion of the substances separately. Douds-Paczan asks for reconsideration of schedule 3A assignment. Runnels outlines current drug scheduling for comparison. Douds-Paczan asks if once scheduled as 3A it could still be sold. Chairperson Rasmussen responds that once controlled it could not be sold. Runnels confirms, possession Class A Misdemeanor Fed without prescription or exception per Chapter 17, manufacturing, delivering, or possession with intent to manufacture or deliver Class B felony. Douds-Paczan notes it was being mixed locally. Dr Sola Olamikan asks if by scheduling, the individual who is the sole supplier to Alaska could be charged. Supports the separation the two issues, address kratom and return to gabapentin. Chairperson Rasmussen asks if discussion of gabapentin should continue. Dr Olamikan supports urgent address of kratom with a return to gabapentin later. Chairperson Rasmussen asks how out of state penalties apply. Runnels responds statute allowing jurisdiction for out of state if culmination of crime occurs in Alaska, could be charged under distribution factor Class B felony. Chairperson Rasmussen asks if this would be enough of a deterrent. Dr Lawrence adds that when 3A was agreed upon in previous meeting, kratom was less concentrated, more concentrated 7OH form scheduling should be revisited. Chairperson Rasmussen asks for consideration of separately scheduling kratom and 7OH. Foster responds lab would not be capable of this. Chairperson Rasmussen asks for clarification of differences. Douds-Paczan replies that

mitragynine becomes 7OH after physiological processing, Dr Lawrence adds he believes she is correct. No further comments.

Brief aside for roll call.

Motion made by Dr Robert Lawrence to classify 7OH as a 2A, Timothy Putney seconds, motion passes unanimously.

Dr Olamikan supports strong emphasis on treatment in letter, Dr Lawrence supports. Chairperson Rasmussen and Runnels confirm within committee prevue. Emphasis agreement on treatment, rehabilitation, reintegration. Nolywaika notes local law enforcement has discretion, focus on out of state distributors. Runnels confirms, adds system focus currently on treatment for individual users, outlines probation conditions emphasize treatment. Dr Lawrence proposes letter category 4 of responsibility recommendation that courts institute same alternatives as is available for similar substances with examples provided. Chairperson Rasmussen reviews letter. Dr Lawrence recommends insert recommendation into next to last paragraph, language alternation away from kratom as umbrella term. Runnels responds for reader clarity kratom be kept as a term. Dr Lawrence agrees but emphasizes care in terminology. Chairperson Rasmussen proposes letter wordsmithing occur over email. Runnels responds under AS 11.71.120 recommendation be made to Governor's office in this context, no ability to make emergency recommendation with these substances. Public notice not required, must be done in public forum.

Motion made by Katholyn Runnels to draft and send letter to the Governor making the recommendation mitragynine and 7OH be scheduled as a 2A controlled substance. Dr Robert Lawrence seconds with caveat. Discussion reopened.

Dr Lawrence notes mitragynine is not driving pubic emergency, mitragynine is a component of 7OH. Meets purposes to say intent is to schedule 7OH as substance of concern. Recommends letter only add 7OH. Foster notes mitragynine is chemical identified by lab, scheduling 7OH exclusively would preclude kratom plant material. Chairperson Rasmussen asks what is causing public health emergency. Dr Lawrence responds it is 7OH, readily available over the counter. Runnels asks Foster if slight tweak of chemical compound would cause mitragynine to fall outside of scheduling. Foster responds yes, it would fall outside of scheduling and this is seen with other substances, ongoing problem. Runnels asks for analog umbrella. Foster responds this could be done, downside would be comprehension barrier for layperson. Discussion of possible statute terminology for recommendation. 'Analog' rejected as too broad. Dr Lawrence proposes letter specify intent and acknowledge terminology difficulty. Chairperson Rasmussen asks Carly Dennis for legislative conversation of this type of legislation. Dennis could not comment. Chairperson Rasmussen to add language to letter capturing language under discussion.

Motion made by Katholyn Runnels to draft and send letter to the Governor making the recommendation mitragynine and 7OH be scheduled as a 2A controlled substance, Dr Robert Lawrence seconds, motion passes unanimously.

Motion made by Timothy Putney to table gabapentin discussion for next meeting, Dr Robert Lawrence seconds, motion passes.

## **V. Anchorage Crime Lab Update**

*Anchorage Crime Lab Update:* Dashboard report provided by Chuck Foster, Assistant Chief of Anchorage Crime Lab. Opens for questions. Runnels asks for trending status of synthetic benzodiazepines. Foster does not have trends over time data, has seen modifications of more common benzodiazepines within the last year. Chairperson Rasmussen asks if manufacturing is occurring within Alaska. Foster defers to law enforcement, but his understanding is they're being trafficked into the state. Discussion of import practices. Discussion of fentanyl's classification as a controlled substance regarding serving as umbrella for new substances. Current Alaska statute is for fentanyl, not an umbrella, scheduled Class 1 at state and federal level. Statute language for enabling statute for fentanyl-related substances recommended to be chemical specific. Chairperson Rasmussen makes note to return to fentanyl loophole at future meeting. Dr Lawrence asks if report has components of prescribed methamphetamine or if illicit. Foster answers all are illicit. No further comments.

## **VI. Legislative Concerns**

No pressing legislative concerns. Discussion tabled for future meeting.

## **VII. New Business**

Mental health and treatment: provider shortage for addiction treatment, mental health treatment to be discussed at future meetings.

That legislature considers which agency is responsible for staffing. Chairperson Rasmussen proposes: Dept of Commerce Boards and Commissions.

No further comments.

## **VII. Public Comment**

No public comment.

## **IX. Next Steps**

Next meeting to fall within Q1. March, Thursday, day and time TBD. Committee required to meet twice yearly, 5-member minimum attendance.

Circulate letter to committee, find language agreement for letter referencing Alaska statutes for fentanyl and derivative compounds.

## **X. Adjournment**

Foster corrects fentanyl derivative compound statute listing. No further comments. Chairperson Rasmussen adjourns meeting at 10:48 AM.

### **Action Items**

- I. Draft and send letter to the Governor making the recommendation mitragynine and 7OH be scheduled as a 2A controlled substance
- II. Set date and time for next meeting

MINUTES APPROVED:

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