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To: Wisconsin Pharmacies and Pharmacists

From: Jonathan Meiman, MD

Chief Medical Officer for Environmental and Occupational Health

Re: Severe Bleeding Continues Among Synthetic Cannabinoids (“K2” and “Spice”) Users

Patients continue to be hospitalized with severe bleeding after using synthetic cannabinoids, often called “fake weed”, “K2”, and “spice”, which have contained the rat poison brodifacoum. As these patients are stabilized and released from the hospital, they will be prescribed large doses (≥ 50 mg/day) of long-term Vitamin K1 (phytonadione) to manage their symptoms. They may require large doses for several weeks to months. Although the prescription of such high doses is unusual, these dosage levels are required due to the long-acting nature of this poisoning.

Pharmacies should check their stock of oral phytonadione to ensure they are able to fill prescriptions if such patients present to them. As pharmacies may see more than one patient requiring this drug, they should work with suppliers to ensure they have adequate supplies.

Due to the high costs associated with these prescriptions, pharmacies are asked to work with patients to try to identify cost-effective formulations. Patients should be counseled that compliance with the prescribed phytonadione therapy and laboratory monitoring is necessary to prevent recurrence of bleeding complications. Additionally, patients should be advised that OTC dietary supplements containing phytonadione only contain on the order of 100mcg (0.1mg) and are not an effective treatment for this coagulopathy.

Please contact the Wisconsin Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 for questions regarding treatment regimens for these patients.