



April 23, 2015

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Dr. Wolkin:

Mississippi has experienced a marked increase in adverse events related to the use of synthetic cannabinoids since April 2, 2015. Over 473 reports of adverse events have been submitted from ER's and hospitals across the state. Eight deaths are currently under investigation as attributed to the use of synthetic cannabinoids.

At this point in the investigation, Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) has instituted a state wide Emergency Department surveillance process, submitted clinical specimens on 165 suspected cases to a specialized lab in California, investigated eight deaths and collaborated with numerous state partners. MSDH has dispatched a statewide Health Alert Network Message to alert clinicians and to support the ED surveillance process. MSDH has conducted numerous media interviews and established an informational webpage.

At this time, MSDH would like to formally request CDC assistance in the form of an Epi-AID. Objectives of the Epi-AID would include: characterization of the outbreak using past CDC experience and data collection tools, assistance with medical record reviews and data abstraction, and defining the factors associated with the reported deaths and hospitalizations. Information gleaned from this investigation would help in messaging and prevention efforts in MS, by better understanding the determinants of severe outcome and better understanding the populations at highest risk. Information obtained would also be generalizable to jurisdictions beyond Mississippi that are experiencing adverse events related to synthetic cannabinoids.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Dobbs", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Thomas Dobbs, MD, MPH  
State Epidemiologist  
Mississippi State Department of Health

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