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PHYSICIANS
ASSOCIATION

A District Branch of the American Psychiatric Association

Dedicated to promoting the highest quality care for people with mental disorders and to serving the professional needs of Ohio's psychiatric physicians.

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January 21, 2026

Cameron McNamee
Director of Policy and Communications
Ohio Board of Pharmacy
77 South High Street, 17th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Members of the Ohio Board of Pharmacy,

On behalf of the Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA), representing more than 1,000 psychiatrists, we write to express our support for the Board's actions to classify mitragynine and certain mitragynine-related compounds as Schedule I controlled substances under Ohio law.

As psychiatrists committed to protecting the mental health and safety of Ohio patients, OPPA members are increasingly concerned about the unregulated availability and use of kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*) and its psychoactive constituents. These substances are widely marketed as natural or benign products, despite mounting scientific and clinical evidence demonstrating opioid-like activity, abuse potential, and associated risks—particularly for individuals with substance use disorders or co-occurring mental health conditions.

Kratom and its derivatives have not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for any medical use. Available research indicates that their active compounds interact with opioid receptors and can produce dependence, withdrawal symptoms, and other adverse effects. The proliferation of increasingly concentrated or chemically modified kratom products further compounds these risks, especially in the absence of standardized manufacturing, labeling, or medical oversight.

OPPA supports the Board's determination that these substances meet the statutory criteria for Schedule I classification, including high potential for abuse, lack of accepted medical use, and absence of demonstrated safety under medical supervision. We also recognize and appreciate the Board's careful evaluation of the relevant statutory factors and its consideration of public health and safety impacts in developing these rules.

In closing, OPPA urges the Board to proceed with finalizing the proposed rule and maintaining appropriate controls on mitragynine-related compounds. These actions represent a solid, evidence-informed approach to addressing emerging substance-related risks and preventing further harm to Ohio communities.

Thank you for your continued commitment to public health and patient safety.

Sincerely,

Nita Bhatt, MD, MPH
OPPA President

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