



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

Chief Mark H. Garrow
Chief Randy Hart
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PRESS RELEASE

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Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Declares Ban on Synthetic Cannabis

Ban Effective Immediately

Akwesasne Territory. On Tuesday January 10, 2012, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council signed Tribal Council Resolution 2012 - 01 declaring a ban on products known as synthetic cannabis, often sold as “herbal incense” and “herbal smoking blends.” The ban includes products derived from similar formulas known and not yet known at this time. These products are banned from both the sale and display within the territory’s retail businesses. Tribal Chief Mark Garrow remarked, “The Tribal Council is responsible for the health, safety, education and welfare of all members of the tribe. So we’re asking the private business sector here in Akwesasne to help us protect our community members.”

Synthetic cannabis is a psychoactive and chemical product that produces a “high” similar to marijuana. Manufacturers claim that synthetic cannabis contains a mixture of traditionally-used medicinal herbs, each of which produces a mild effect. The overall product blend supposedly results in a marijuana-type intoxication. Some brands sell their products as “herbal smoking blends.” In either case, the products are usually smoked by users.

However, when labs analyzed the product, they did not find many characteristic “fingerprint” molecules from the claimed plant ingredients. The samples had large amounts of synthetic chemicals. This suggests that the actual ingredients might not be the same as those listed on the packet. “We have a duty to implement rules and laws to regulate and educate the community to the dangers and possible harmful effects of products,” said Tribal Chief Randy Hart. “This includes products sold throughout the world and within the jurisdictions of the Saint Regis Mohawk Territory.”

It seems likely that synthetic cannabis can precipitate psychosis and, in some cases, it is prolonged. Studies suggest that synthetic cannabis intoxication is associated with acute psychosis. It can worsen previously stable psychotic disorders. It may also have the ability to trigger a long-term psychotic disorder among vulnerable individuals. A user who consumed three grams of synthetic cannabis every day for several months showed withdrawal symptoms similar to those of narcotics withdrawal. The number of calls to United States poison control centers about synthetic cannabis has doubled in the last year.

Helping Build A Better Tomorrow

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“This ban will be in effect immediately,” noted Tribal Chief Ron LaFrance. “The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe’s Compliance Department will be responsible for enforcing the ban.” As of January 10, 2012, the Compliance Department will begin notifying retailers of the ban so that this product can be taken off the shelves.

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The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government
of the Saint Regis Mohawk People