



AMERICAN KRATOM ASSOCIATION

Protecting Consumer Access to Safe, Natural Kratom
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MEDIA ADVISORY

September 29, 2026

CORRECTION FOR THE RECORD: The Products Reportedly Recovered in the Ole Miss Death Investigations Were Not Natural Kratom

American Kratom Association to hold Oxford press conference Wednesday, Sept. 30, at 10 a.m. CT on the misidentification of "Smax" Pseudo-DHM tablets as "kratom," the need for accurate public information, and the scientific process that must follow

OXFORD, Miss. — The American Kratom Association (AKA) is asking every news organization covering the deaths of two University of Mississippi students to correct the record: the products reportedly purchased by both students, identified in newly released law-enforcement records as "Smax" Pseudo-DHM tablets, are not natural kratom and should not be described as "kratom."

Publicly available marketing describes that product as a high-potency MGM-15 product. The Drug Enforcement Administration has placed MGM-15 and MGM-16 in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act, and the Department of Health and Human Services has stated that these compounds do not occur naturally in the kratom plant. They are synthetic derivatives or chemically manipulated forms of 7-OH.

Early public statements characterized the recovered products simply as "kratom." National and local outlets understandably repeated that description. The record now shows the information available to investigators was far more specific. Continuing to call a Schedule I synthetic opioid product "kratom" misinforms the public, leaves Ole Miss students and parents without the precise warning they needed, and falsely associates a natural botanical used safely for centuries with a manufactured product that is nothing of the kind.

The official toxicology findings have not been released. AKA is not asserting what caused either death; it is asking that the product be identified accurately while the scientific process runs its course.

PRESS CONFERENCE DETAILS

WHAT **Press conference:** How law enforcement and media misinformed the public about the products in the Ole Miss investigations; the difference between natural kratom and synthetic products sold under the kratom name; why accurate information and sound science — not sensationalized, knee-jerk reaction — must guide what happens next.

WHO **Mac Haddow**, Senior Fellow on Public Policy, American Kratom Association
Mississippi natural kratom consumers, who will speak to their own experience and to what the public warnings meant for them

WHEN **Wednesday, September 30, 2026**
10:00 a.m. Central Time

WHERE **711 Jackson Avenue East**
Oxford, Mississippi 38655

LIVESTREAM AKA YouTube Live
Members of the media unable to attend in person may watch and submit questions through the livestream.

RSVP / MEDIA Mac Haddow, press@americankratom.org, +1 571-294-5978
Speakers will be available for one-on-one interviews following the program.

BACKGROUND FOR REPORTERS: NATURAL KRATOM IS NOT “SYNTHETIC KRATOM”

Kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*) is a tree native to Southeast Asia. For centuries, people there have consumed its leaves directly, brewed them as a tea, or concentrated that tea into an extract. Natural kratom leaf has a long record of use and is under active federal study for its harm-reduction potential in opioid and alcohol use disorders: the National Institutes of Health has funded research into kratom’s principal alkaloid, mitragynine, as a potential treatment for opioid use disorder, and Purdue University researchers are studying kratom alkaloids for alcohol use disorder.

In the last several years, bad actors have begun synthesizing novel opioid compounds — including chemically manipulated 7-OH and, now, MGM-15 and MGM-16 — and deliberately packaging and selling them under the kratom name. These products do not share natural kratom’s alkaloid profile, its pharmacology, or its safety history. Federal regulators at FDA, HHS, DOJ, and DEA have recognized that distinction. Public warnings that erase it are dangerous to public health, because they warn people about the wrong thing.

AKA’s position is that a product may be called “kratom,” “natural kratom,” or a “product containing kratom” only if it meets all of the following:

- It contains no synthetic or semi-synthetic compounds of any kind;
- It retains the alkaloid profile found in the natural leaf, with no concentration or enrichment of any minor alkaloid; and
- Its alkaloid profile contains at least 100 parts mitragynine to 1 part 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) and mitragynine pseudoindoxyl (MP), combined.

A product that fails any one of these tests is not kratom, whatever its label says, and should not be reported as kratom.

WHAT AKA IS ASKING OF THE MEDIA

- Identify the product by name — “Smax” Pseudo-DHM tablets, marketed as an MGM-15 product — rather than the generic term “kratom.”
- Where prior coverage described the products as “kratom,” update or correct that coverage.
- Distinguish natural kratom leaf from synthetic and chemically manipulated products sold under the kratom name.
- Wait for the toxicology findings before reporting any substance as the cause of either death.

About the American Kratom Association

The American Kratom Association is a consumer advocacy organization committed to protecting access to safe, natural kratom leaf products and advancing science-based consumer protection standards. AKA supports age restrictions, accurate labeling, contaminant testing, good manufacturing practices, and strong enforcement against adulterated, mislabeled, synthetic, semi-synthetic, concentrated, fortified, or chemically manipulated products falsely marketed as kratom.

Media Contact

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