

FLORIDA SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION



Xylazine

While the State of Florida continues to battle the opioid epidemic, a new threat is on the rise that is making Florida's fight against drug overdoses increasingly more difficult. Xylazine, or "tranq," is a veterinary sedative used primarily for large animals and has no approved human use. Despite this, it is increasingly found on the black market, where it's mixed with narcotics like fentanyl, heroin, and cocaine. When combined with opioids, Xylazine poses a severe threat, as it mimics opioid effects but does not respond to opioid antagonists like naloxone. Under current law, anyone in possession of Xylazine can only be charged with possession and distribution of a controlled substance.

In response to the growing illegal misuse of Xylazine, Florida's Attorney General has moved to reclassify it as a Schedule I controlled substance, with an exemption for legitimate veterinary use. Building on that action, this legislation amends s. 893.135, F.S., to include Xylazine in the state's drug trafficking statute, while preserving an exemption for veterinary purposes. Under this legislation, a dealer who unlawfully sells, delivers or manufactures Xylazine or a mixture of xylazine will face a first-degree felony and subject to mandatory minimum prison terms and financial penalties, with severity based on the quantity involved.

The Attorney General's Office also recommended designating 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) as a Schedule I controlled substance when present in concentrations above 400 parts per million. This provision distinguishes natural kratom from adulterated or chemically enhanced products that have been linked to overdoses, ensuring that law enforcement can act against the illicit manufacture and sale of these dangerous substances.

This legislation will hold criminals who unlawfully manufacture or sell Xylazine accountable by providing law enforcement with the tools to go after these drug dealers, while also ensuring veterinarians have the tools they need to safely treat animals. Additionally, by addressing 7-OH, the bill targets only the altered, high-potency kratom products driving overdose cases, not naturally occurring kratom, giving law enforcement clear authority to shut down bad actors without impacting legitimate businesses or consumers.

HB 309 by Representative Bankson and SB 432 by Senator Yarborough



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