



**Karen White**  
At Large Council Member

---

## PRESS RELEASE

**CONTACT:**

February 17, 2017

Karen L. White, (574) 235-9221  
[kwhite@southbendin.gov](mailto:kwhite@southbendin.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

---

### **Synthetic Marijuana Press Conference**

In light of the recent alarming K2 overdose of three local teens, a coalition of local organizations and concerned citizens is speaking out about the dangers of K2, also known as synthetic marijuana. This harmful substance is a combination of poisonous chemicals sprayed on a plant material with the intent of mimicking a THC high. The chemicals, though, are far more potent, addictive, and dangerous than real marijuana. Despite state bans across the nation and a local crackdown on the drug in 2014, the drug is still widely available and heavily marketed toward youth in attractive, cartoonish packaging and nicknames.

The drug is responsible countless emergency room admissions with side-effects including severe agitation, psychosis, tachycardia (a heart rate that is too fast), elevated blood pressure, lethargy, vomiting, seizures, tremors, and confusion. In the state of Mississippi alone, synthetic marijuana is responsible for 1,263 ER visits in which 22% of those were admitted to the hospital and 5% to the ICU. The University of Mississippi Medical Center attributes 17 suspicious deaths to K2 use.

On **Friday, February 24, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.** at Laymen Chapel CME Church on 303 S. Kenmore South Bend, IN 46619. The following individuals will speak to the dangers of K2, urge users especially youth to quit K2 use and seek addiction services, implore local policymakers to support local addiction services, and ramp up enforcement against those distributing the substance.

**Press Conference Participants:**

- Laymen Chapel Pastor & NAACP – Rev. Terrell Jackson
- St. Joseph County African American Democratic Coalition – Debra Walker
- South Bend Common Council– Karen L. White
- South Bend Mayor’s Office – Shay Davis & Cheri Peate
- South Bend Police Department – Chief Scott Ruskowski
- Indiana Representative (Dist. 7)—Rep. Joe Taylor III
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., South Bend Alumnae Chapter
- Beacon Healthcare System –Lynn Coleman & Kimberly Reeves
- Partnership for Education and Prevention of Substance Abuse (PEPSA) – Robert Smith

###