WHEREAS, Cannabis is a psychoactive drug with a well-defined addiction potential, and its possession and use are now legal in many states under various circumstances; and

WHEREAS, The active compound in cannabis is THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), which is a ligand that binds to CB1 and CB2 receptors in the central nervous system and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, Completely synthetic ligands for the CB1 receptor have been identified and synthesized, and are used to produce euphoria and related psychoactive effects, and go by street names such as “Spice” and “K2”; and

WHEREAS, The drugs known as synthetic cannabinoids have no medical indications, but are used by inhalation or ingestion primarily for their psychoactive effects; and

WHEREAS, These drugs are not manufactured by any legitimate pharmaceutical company; and

WHEREAS, The illicit source of synthetic cannabinoids leads to the potential for contamination with other potentially injurious compounds, with or without the knowledge of the purchasers and users of these drugs; and

WHEREAS, In Illinois there have been over 100 persons who have been exposed to a contaminant (identified in some of the cases as brodifacoum, a poison that is a vitamin K antagonist) that has resulted in a severe bleeding diathesis leading to hospitalization, the need for critical care services, and a number of deaths; and

WHEREAS, While nearly all of these patients so far have been in the state of Illinois and have sought care from Illinois physicians, there is potential for this to occur in other places across the United States; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association encourage all physicians to become aware of the adverse psychiatric and medical effects, including coagulopathy with severe bleeding, related to the use of synthetic cannabinoids, which may or may not be contaminated (New HOD Policy); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA encourage physicians to educate their patients about synthetic cannabinoids and strongly advise them that the use of these drugs carries significant health risks that can produce psychiatric morbidity and hematological mortality. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined
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