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November 10, 2025

## Straight Talk

**Welcome to the latest edition of the Steered Straight Newsletter! We are thrilled to bring you updates on the impactful work that Michael DeLeon and the Steered Straight team are doing to support communities, young people, and families nationwide. Our mission is to inform, educate, and empower young people to make positive choices. Thank you for joining us on this journey to make a difference.**



### **URGENT ALERT: The Potent Opioid Threat Disguised as Candy**

**This subject matter is so important and so scary that I am writing about it for the second week in a row!! I am begging you and everyone else to listen!**

Is a lethal, unregulated drug being sold to your children as candy?  
The answer is terrifying.

A crisis of lethal indifference is unfolding in plain sight, and it's specifically targeting our children. This warning uncovers the extreme dangers of Kratom and its hyper-potent derivative, 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH).

Read the full blog article at [www.michaeldeleonblog.org](http://www.michaeldeleonblog.org)

You will learn that 7-OH is not a harmless supplement; it acts like a synthetic opioid, reported to be up to 13 times stronger than morphine at the receptor level. Its products are deliberately disguised as gummies and candies—a tactic that manufacturers use to profit by hooking minors on a highly addictive, unregulated substance.

The issue is urgent: we reveal how this lack of regulation exposes users to products concentrated with massive, unsafe doses, leading to acute medical crises. The gravity of this threat is underscored by a real-world example: multiple middle school students in Georgia were recently rushed to the hospital after ingesting these products.

You will gain vital knowledge on:

- The lethal overdose risk (including severe respiratory depression).
- The permanent damage these opioid-like substances inflict on the developing adolescent brain.
- The sickening profit motive driving manufacturers to market a deadly drug to minors.

This is critical information for every parent and educator who needs to know how to spot the signs and protect their children from this pervasive, profit-driven danger. Read the full blog now: [michaeldenonblog.org](http://michaeldenonblog.org)

### Michael DeLeon

## Road Warrior



## How the Miles Make a Difference

The greatest honor I when Michael is asked to keynote a Corrections Conference - to share with those responsible for rehabilitation and re-entry programs what worked for him and what he has seen works for thousands of offenders! The Tennessee Corrections Institute got their socks knocked off by the best presentation they'd ever seen!

POWERUL DAY! I mean POWERFUL!!! Almost 1,000 students and staff educated and empowered with Truth! Incredible feedback!

Steered Straight

## In The News

### L.A. County stores must immediately stop selling kratom and 7-OH, health department warns

Story by Sandra McDonald, Karen Garcia • 2d • [5 min read](#)

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L.A. County officials say retailers must pull kratom (shown here in capsule form) and synthetic kratom, sometimes called 7-OH, from shelves immediately. ((Mary Esch / Associated Press))  
© (Mary Esch / Associated Press)

Los Angeles County officials are set to pull kratom and its synthetic extract, sometimes called 7-OH, from shelves immediately.

Inspectors will be sent to retailers next week to begin red-tagging illegal products containing the compounds, the L.A. County Department of Public Health said in a news release Friday morning. Shops that don't comply could be hit with fines or other penalties.

Kratom is an herbal extract from the leaves of *Mitragyna speciosa*, a tree native to Southeast Asia. It is sold in shops and online in a variety of forms, including powders, pills and liquid extracts. Brands selling kratom often make claims that it can address pain, anxiety and mood disorders.

Matthew Lowe, executive director of the Global Kratom Coalition, said natural kratom has been used in the U.S. for more than 50 years and according to a [2020 Johns Hopkins Survey](#), people have been using it to alleviate anxiety and treat chronic pain.

In the last few years, a more potent, synthetic version of kratom refined into its psychoactive compound 7-Hydroxymitragynine, or 7-OH, hit shelves across the U.S.

7-OH products are often marketed as "plant alkaloids," drawing criticism from some, including Lowe, who argue the labeling is misleading, confusing consumers into thinking it's the same as natural kratom.

[▶ Related video: Toledo has banned synthetic kratom sales. Here's the science behind it \(WTOL Toledo\)](#)





When mixed with alcohol, medications or illicit drugs, the county health department warns, 7-OH products can "cause severe respiratory depression and death. Importantly, these products are unregulated and may contain unknown concentrations of 7-OH, increasing the risk of unintentional overdose."

There have been [six reported kratom-related deaths](#) in Los Angeles County in just the past few months.

"Given that this is new and emerging substance, this is also since the medical examiner started tracking 7-OH data," the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health told The Times via email. Since the county began tracking 7-OH in deaths only in April of this year, it is unclear how many other overdoses could have occurred previously.

After publication of this article, the county medical examiner released the death reports to The Times. Each of the deceased had kratom and 7-OH in their bodies, according to the reports, but it was not immediately clear what role they played in the deaths, as compared with other substances — including alcohol, prescription sedatives and muscle relaxants, and illicit drugs like cocaine — that were also found in the six bodies. The Times first requested the coroner's report for the kratom-related deaths on Oct. 24.

"Kratom and 7-OH products are sold as natural remedies, but they are illegal and unsafe," Dr. Muntu Davis, the county health officer said in the release. "They are sold in gas stations, smoke shops, online, and other retailers. People should avoid using these products, and store owners/operators must remove them immediately to prevent harm."

Right now, consumers have no clarity on kratom, 7-OH or any other metabolites, said Yaël Ossowski, deputy director of Consumer Choice Center, a nonprofit consumer advocacy group.

"At any gas station or smoke shop, there's the powder, the liquid extracts, and pills all offered at different doses, with different brands," Ossowski said. "This obviously leads to consumer confusion and uninformed choices, incorrect dosing and likely bad experiences that smart regulation would avoid."

The kratom and 7-OH market has grown largely because people want targeted pain relief and remedies for their ailments, "but don't necessarily want to have the full effects of more powerful opioids that have a fuller effect on the body," he said.

"Kratom has been successfully used for generations in other countries as an opioid alternative," Ossowski said. But highly concentrated 7-OH products are a different beast altogether.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, [kratom](#) and [7-OH](#) are not lawfully marketed in the U.S. as a drug product, a dietary supplement or an approved food additive.

California adopts federal law concerning food and dietary supplements, the California Department of Public Health told The Times via email.

"Until kratom and its pharmacologically active key ingredients mitragynine and 7-OH are approved for use, they will remain classified as adulterants in drugs, dietary supplements and foods," a department spokesperson said.

The spokesperson added that the department has been conducting investigative work associated with kratom for the last two years and "continues to take appropriate action to

protect the public against adulterated products containing kratom or 7-OH."



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"CDPH embargoes or destroys foods and dietary supplements within the state that are adulterated with kratom or 7-OH once they are identified during investigations; however, we do not comment on the specifics of ongoing investigations," the spokesperson said.

7-OH producers have publicly defended their products in the face of lawsuits and FDA crackdowns, arguing it is a safer alternative to illicit opioids like fentanyl and has saved lives, not taken them.

Vince Sanders, founder and CEO of CBD American Shaman who helped develop an early 7-OH product, has said the attack on 7-OH is being led by companies selling natural kratom, who have had their market share overtaken by what he says is "a vastly superior product."

The Kansas City businessman said a ban anywhere in the country would hurt people who have used 7-OH to treat substance abuse disorders or chronic pain and now rely on the product as an alternative to costly prescription medication.

"People that have changed their life using it are extremely concerned," Sanders said. "They're scared to death. I mean, there are people that ... plan to pull money out of their 401K, or load up their credit cards, or whatever they've got to do to buy years and years of supply."

He acknowledged that both kratom and 7-OH are frequently taken in higher doses than he recommends, but argued manufacturers and retailers should not be held accountable for those decisions. He compared it to alcohol: "You buy a 750-milliliter bottle, and if you go home and drink that entire bottle, and you do that every single night, is that your fault, or is that Jim Beams' fault?"

Communities across the state have taken it upon themselves to act in the absence of state and federal regulation. Orange County and the cities of Newport Beach, San Diego and Oceanside have all prohibited the sale, distribution or possession of kratom. Riverside County is [looking to deter the sale and marketing of kratom](#) and 7-OH products to people under the age of 21.

Los Angeles County does not have its own regulatory ordinance for the products.

"I think that the local action is signaling intent. It's saying to the state and [federal authorities], you need to do something about this," Lowe said in regard to synthetic 7-OH.

But outright prohibition bans that include natural kratom could bring another host of issues including whether local enforcement of the ban will even happen, and the possibility that a black market for the products may arise, he said.

"You leave people without any options, so they either find alternative options or they just drive across city lines or county lines and and go get it themselves," Lowe said. Indeed, kratom and 7-OH are widely available on online marketplaces.

This story originally appeared in [Los Angeles Times](#)

## On the Road to Recovery

Steered Straight and Recovery Army sat down with Tyler Bowman. Tyler's addiction started at a very early age. After he found his sobriety, he sees that even as young as age 3 he had an addictive personality. His parents had a shaky relationship, and he used this for his benefit by manipulating his parents and going back and forth between them to get what he wanted. A bad break up and a hand injury led to abusing prescription painkillers. He sees this as the tipping point. He finished his prescription and experienced withdrawals. In 2011 an event led to Tyler sleeping for 3 days and a call to poison control by his mom. Intrigued? To hear the rest of Tyler's story in his own words, please click on the link/photo below and watch his inspiring journey!

To see more stories of hope and inspiration please visit:

[www.recoveryarmy.com](http://www.recoveryarmy.com)



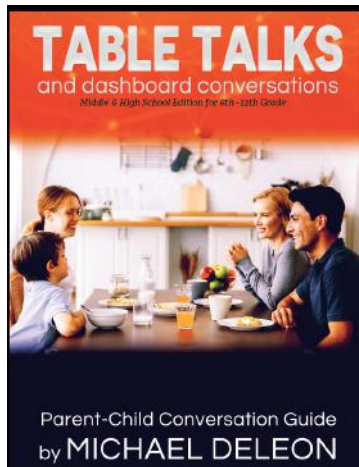
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## TABLE TALKS

Michael has created workbooks for parents and children that guide them in managing relationships and discussing difficult topics beyond drug and alcohol abuse. Each month, he focuses on a different subjects and offers many different topics of conversation and activities you can do with your children to help foster that deep connection and communication that is so vital.



Table Talks and Dashboard Conversations is an in-depth Conversation Guide for Parents and Kids. You can order through [Amazon](#) or the [Steered Straight website](#).



### **The Month of November: Alcohol, Tobacco/Nicotine, Vaping, Drinking and Driving**

The focus of November is alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, vaping, and drinking and driving. November is a great time before the holidays kick in to full gear to start talking to kids and young adults about these topics. This will encourage them to think before they act when faced with the unique challenges that come this time of year. There are so many social events, parties, and celebrations that involve alcohol. **This week I would like to encourage you to have a conversation with your kids about the value of prioritizing their safety and the tough call that comes when they need to do what needs to be done to keep one of their peers safe.** Give them some suggestions of what they can do before they find themselves in a sticky situation. What words of wisdom do you have to offer them to help them navigate this situation and others that will come up? Have the conversation. Stress the importance and the consequences that can happen from just one time. It can end their life or someone else's.

Spend the week building your kids up! The more we open up with kids, the more they will open up to the important adults in their lives.

## Headlines We Are Following

[The Dangers of “Feel Free”: A Natural Drink Hooking Youth with Devastating Consequences — Michael DeLeon Blog](#)

[The Vape That Could Have Taken a Life - And the Wake-Up Call We Can't Ignore — Michael DeLeon Blog](#)

[Dozo Perks: Trading Our Children's Health for Profits — Michael DeLeon Blog](#)

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## Contact Steered Straight

Michael and his team of professional Steered Straight speakers are eager to meet you in person and make a profound impact on your students, staff, and community. To bring their inspiring message to your next event, contact Steered Straight to schedule.

[CONTACT STEERED STRAIGHT](#)

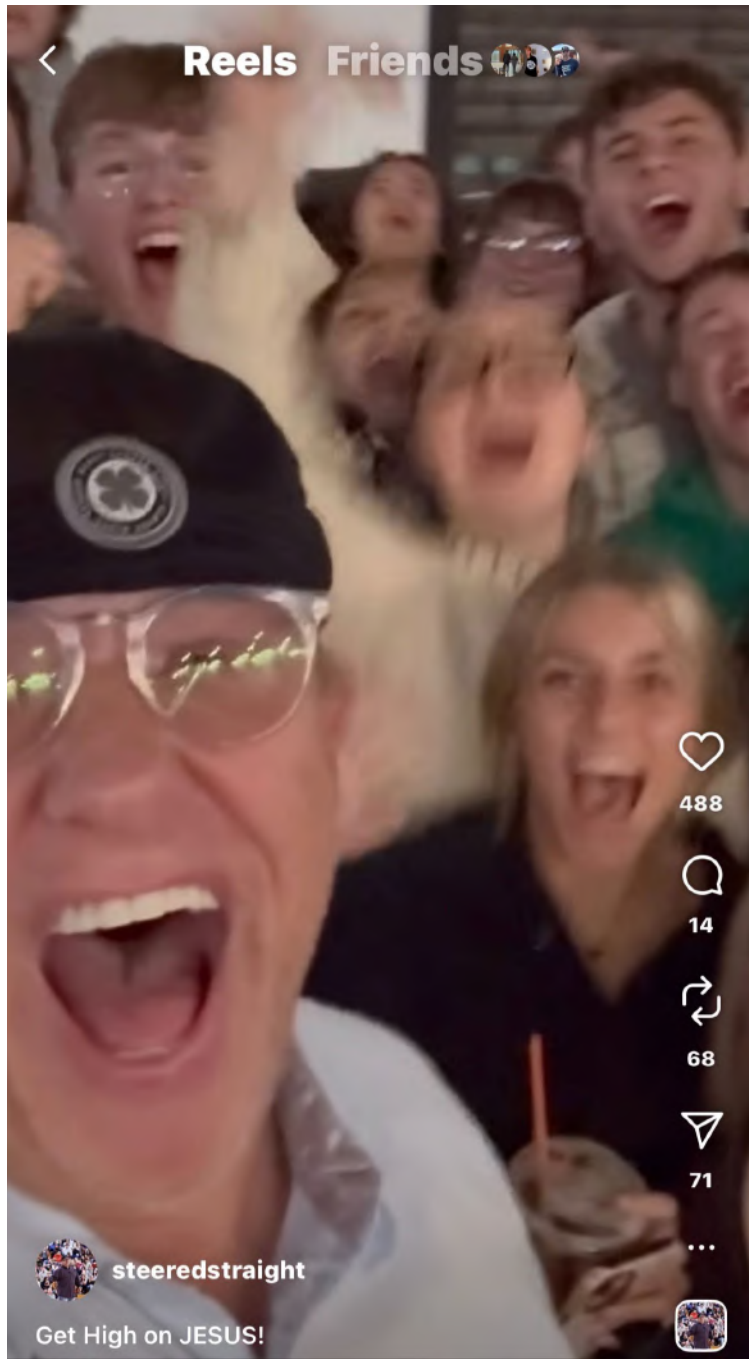


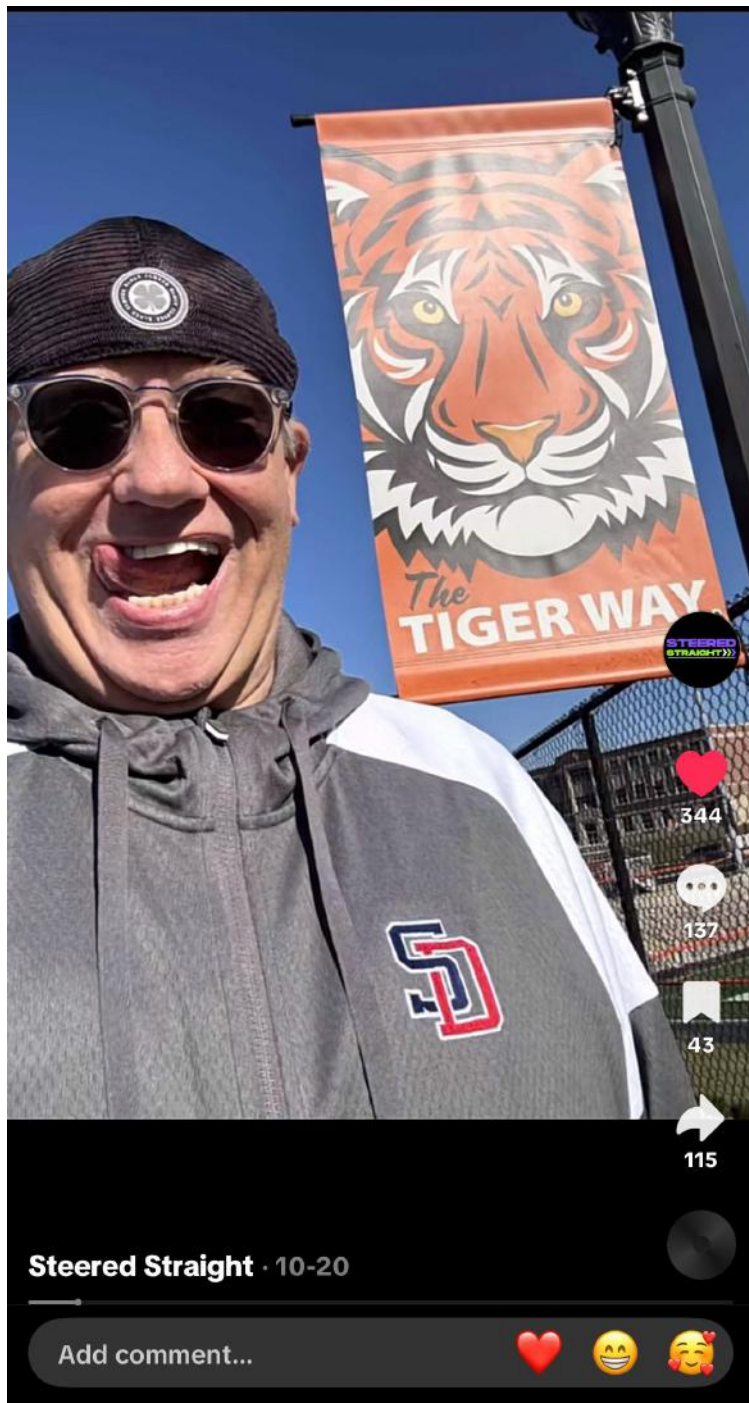
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We don't get high on drugs, we get high on.....

Michael stirring the pot once again with some healthy school rivalry on TIKTOK

Michael DeLeon and the team at Steered Straight are working hard to ensure this generation gets what they need to change the world. No other program

like it and no one delivers the message better. All for the kids! Follow Michael and Steered Straight on social media so you don't miss a beat!

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