



## Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

**Ramon Garcia**  
*County Judge*

**A. C. Cuellar, Jr.**  
*Commissioner, Precinct 1*

**Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu**  
*Commissioner, Precinct 2*

**Joe M. Flores**  
*Commissioner, Precinct 3*

**Joseph Palacios**  
*Commissioner, Precinct 4*

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## **NEWS ADVISORY**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2015

### **Hidalgo County Health Department warns of dangers from synthetic drug use**

**EDINBURG** – The Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Department has issued a Public Health Advisory on the dangers of using synthetic drugs, such as synthetic marijuana, after a dramatic surge in teens and young adults needing medical attention for adverse reactions and potentially lethal overdoses. A news conference will be held at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21 in the Commissioners Courtroom. In addition to Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Chief Administrative Officer Eduardo "Eddie" Olivarez, news media will also have the opportunity to speak with Sheriff J.E. "Eddie" Guerra, Criminal District Attorney Ricardo Rodriguez Jr. and County Judge Ramon Garcia.

Olivarez said in the past two weeks there have been over 25 reports of teens and young adults with symptoms associated with synthetic marijuana use.

"This is a serious problem and a community response is needed to ensure the safety of teens and young adults and others who do not recognize the extreme risk of using these drugs," said Olivarez.

Synthetic marijuana goes by hundreds of names such as Spice, K2, No More Mr. Nice Guy and is marketed as a "legal high." Synthetic marijuana resembles pot but its addictive and potentially lethal high is derived from chemical compounds sprayed onto herbs and other leafy materials. The chemicals, which are produced in China or underground labs, are designed to mimic THC, the active ingredient in real marijuana. However, these drugs can be up to 100 times as potent as THC at stimulating brain receptors and are addictive. These drugs are not tested for safety and users do not know what potentially lethal chemicals they are consuming in these products.

"Some of the symptoms from using synthetic cannabis include severe agitation and anxiety, high blood pressure, heart palpitations, nausea and vomiting, muscle spasms, seizures and tremors, intense hallucinations, psychotic episodes, renal failure and even death," Olivarez said. "Our goal in issuing the Health Advisory is to put parents, teachers and the public on alert and to take action."

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- WHAT:** News Conference on synthetic marijuana dangers
- WHO:** County Judge Ramon Garcia, District Attorney Ricardo Rodriguez Jr., Sheriff J.E. "Eddie" Guerra, Health & Human Services Chief Administrative Officer Eduardo "Eddie" Olivarez
- WHEN:** 1:30 to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 21
- WHERE:** Commissioners Court, 100 E. Cano, first floor, Edinburg

*Hidalgo County is home to one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. We provide health and justice to the 800,000 residents of our county as well as a variety of services to residents who live outside city limits. We strive to be accessible and responsive to our citizens by providing excellent public service through the values of leadership, transparency, fairness, collaboration, respect and fiscal responsibility.*