

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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THE BALTIMORE STATEMENT ON DANGERS OF POWDERED ALCOHOL

Powdered alcohol is a concentrated powder that contains approximately 55% alcohol by weight. It can be easily carried and concealed, and then mixed with water to reconstitute.

The U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau approved labeling and distribution of powdered alcohol in April of 2014. Within two weeks, it reversed this decision. Then, in March 2015, the Tax and Trade Bureau suddenly approved the product labels—essentially approving powdered alcohol for widespread sale and distribution.

As pediatricians, emergency physicians, and public health leaders, we have grave concerns over the sale and use of this product. In Baltimore, alcohol is already the number one drug used by teens, with over half of high school students having tried alcohol, and 1 in 8 teens binge drinking at least once in the past month. Children who first use alcohol at age 15 are four times more likely to have an alcohol use disorder sometime in their life.

Powdered alcohol is easier to conceal, facilitating use by youth. It will make oversight more difficult for parents, teachers, and law enforcement officials. Powdered alcohol may also lead to greater and unintentional alcohol consumption, which can lead to poisoning, motor vehicle accidents, and even death.

As of today, five states (VA, LA, AK, VT, SC) have already banned powdered alcohol before its approval, and at least 22 other states are proposing bans in their legislatures (including AZ, CO, CT, FL, HI, KS, IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, NJ, NY, ND, OH, OK, PA, RI, TN, UT, WI, WY).

Please join Baltimore’s health department and our region’s leading pediatricians and emergency physicians to protect our children and all of our residents from this dangerous substance.

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