

DA-BACKED SYNTHETIC DRUG BAN NOW LAW

Store owners have 60 days, but should remove cocaine and meth-like drugs now, DAs say



A district attorney backed bill to ban the possession, use and sale of so-called bath salts, synthetic marijuana, 2C-E and salvia divinorum was signed into law today by Governor Tom Corbett. The bill quickly moved through the General Assembly and to the governor's desk after prosecutors and law enforcement reported an alarming number of bizarre and dangerous incidents involving new, dangerous drugs that fell outside of the law related to controlled substances.

"We have seen the devastating impact these unregulated, dangerous and deadly drugs have had in our communities," said Dauphin County District Attorney Edward M. Marsico, Jr. who is also president of the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association. "This bill will quite literally save lives, and we are grateful that Governor Corbett and the General Assembly worked with us to respond quickly and decisively to the emerging threat of synthetic drugs."

The new law goes into effect in 60 days however district attorneys called upon the stores that currently sell synthetic drugs to voluntarily take the substances off their shelves immediately.

"These synthetic drugs are posing a significant public safety and public health problem throughout Pennsylvania, right now -- today," said Crawford County District Attorney Francis Schultz,

who also serves as PDAA vice president. "Store owners may have 60 days until the law goes into effect, but they need to do the right thing, for the right reasons, and take these drugs off their shelves before anyone else gets hurt, or worse."

The Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association identified synthetic drugs as one of its top legislative priorities in March after law enforcement around the state reported dangerous and bizarre behaviors by people high on the legal, but highly potent substances.

In May, a Lebanon County man was accused of assaulting a state trooper while high on bath salts. On the same day the bill cleared the General

Assembly, a teenage boy in Montgomery County was seriously injured after he jumped off a three story parking garage while high on legal, synthetic marijuana. These are just two examples among many that led district attorneys to describe synthetic drugs as the most dangerous drug crisis since methamphetamine labs found their way into Pennsylvania.

Several district attorneys sought local injunctions to ban the sale of the drugs in advance of the legislation.



Governor Tom Corbett signs the synthetic drug ban into law. Also pictured are district attorneys G. Michael Green, David J. Freed, Shawn C. Wagner, David J. Arnold, Edward M. Marsico, Jr. and Risa Vetri Ferman.