

29 April 2020

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By email: eacd@health.govt.nz

Proposed classification of specified fentanyl analogues and synthetic cannabinoids as controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975

Dear Andrea

Thank you for inviting the New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) to provide feedback on the above consultation. The NZMA is New Zealand's largest medical organisation, with more than 5,000 members from all areas of medicine. The NZMA aims to provide leadership of the medical profession, and to promote professional unity and values, and the health of all New Zealanders.

We note that the proposed classifications include scheduling the following fentanyl analogues as Class A controlled drugs (p-Methoxy-butyrylfentanyl, p-Fluoro-butyrylfentanyl, ortho-fluorofentanyl) and scheduling the following synthetic cannabinoids as Class B1 controlled drugs (CUMYL-4CN-BINACA, ADB-FUBINACA, ADB-CHMINICA, 5F-MDMB-PICA, NM-2201). We note that the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs (EACD) concluded that the current controls on these substances are not in line with the associated risks of harm; the specified fentanyl analogues are considered to have a very high risk of harm and the specified synthetic cannabinoids are considered to have a high risk of harm.

The NZMA strongly supports scheduling the above substances as controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975. However, we believe that the specified synthetic cannabinoids would be more appropriately scheduled as Class A (instead of Class B1) controlled drugs. Doing so would be more consistent with the rationale in the consultation, including the observation that they share a substantially similar structure with other synthetic cannabinoids that have already been scheduled as Class A controlled drugs. As the EACD notes, synthetic cannabinoids have been implicated in a number of deaths and hospitalisations in New Zealand and internationally.

Finally, it is our view that requiring individual synthetic cannabinoids to be classified as they emerge instead of being able to be grouped together as a class enables the manufacturers of these

illicit substances to stay ahead of controls by continuing to synthesise substances that are yet to be classified.

We hope our feedback is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Baddock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'K' and a trailing flourish.

Dr Kate Baddock
NZMA Chair