

February 02, 2026

I am confused and concerned to hear about the proposed banning of 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH). I have had diagnosed chronic pain since I was a child. I have spent over half a decade trying to manage my pain, and nothing has been more effective for managing my pain than 7-OH. If these are banned, millions of people, including disabled Veterans and people with chronic pain in general, would lose the only means of coping that has aided in them being able to function in their daily lives.

I couldn't find any reliable statistics showing there have been any deaths due to 7-OH alone. The Adverse Event Reporting System since 2023 reveals zero deaths due to 7-OH alone, and only two deaths when you include two multi-drug overdose deaths (FDA, 2023). Furthermore, alcohol kills over 178,000 people in the U.S. annually (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2025, para. 3), over the counter Tylenol kills over 500 people annually (Agrawal, et al., 2025, para. 1), and cigarette smoking (including secondhand smoke) alone kills approximately over 480,000 people in the U.S. (CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020, para. 4). What is so different about these provenly significantly more harmful products that allow them to evade being banned?

7-OH is derived from a natural, God given plant that is kratom (*Mitragyna Speciosa*). Both kratom and 7-OH have many medicinal benefits. "Kratom is often used to self-treat conditions such as pain, coughing, diarrhea, anxiety and depression, opioid use disorder, and opioid withdrawal" (FDA, 2025, para 1). The research about 7-OH is still ongoing, but so is the research for e-cigarettes. "Understanding the effects of {e-cigarette} products will require ongoing research..." (RTI International, 2023, para. 5). Despite this, e-cigarettes are readily accessible in the U.S.

I do not understand why 7-OH is being painted in a negative light, and why this ban is being pushed. I am aware of some of the main concerns, a couple being that it is addictive and that children are obtaining it. I challenge this with the facts that alcohol and tobacco are more addictive with 9.7% of people 12 and older being addicted to alcohol in 2024 (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2025, para. 1), and 8.5% of people 12 and older in the US are addicted to nicotine (Cleveland Clinic, 2022, para. 9), compared to less than 0.7% of people in the U.S. being addicted to kratom (Palamar, 2021, para. 3). I could not find any statistics on the percentage of people in the U.S. who use 7-OH, nor could I find any reliable statistics on the percentage of 7-OH users being addicted, suggesting that the evidence is either insufficient, inconclusive, and/or fragile. Children are

also getting their hands on nicotine. Every day, nearly 2,500 children under 18 years old try their first cigarette (American Lung Association, 2024, para. 3). 12.9 million people aged 12-20 years old (or 39.2 percent) reported they had obtained alcohol (National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2024, para 1).

If this ban is enacted, people are going to obtain street products that are not safely regulated, and that runs the risk of the substances being laced with dangerous and provenly deadly drugs such as fentanyl. 7-OH products also make it possible for people to refrain from using dangerous opioids. Reports from the CDC report a nearly 24% decline in U.S. drug overdose deaths from September 2023 to September 2024 compared to the previous year. (CDC, 2025, para. 1). The rise in popularity among 7-OH products could be the explanation behind these statistics.

I find it concerning that some 7-OH products are marketed as “dietary supplements”. If there is a requirement made ensuring companies appropriately label these products, I believe this would suppress many of the problems associated. Furthermore, strictly enforcing the 21+ purchasing rule in gas stations and smoke shops would keep children and adults under 21 safe. This would guarantee the main concerns are addressed, and people with chronic pain would still have access to the care they so desperately need.

Millions of people in America use 7-OH to manage chronic pain. Banning these would mean taking away the livelihoods of Veterans, people who are chronically in pain, and myself. People with chronic pain are 2-3 times more likely to die by suicide than people without chronic pain. (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2022, para. 1). This proves that 7-OH saves lives. Furthermore, suicidal idealization ranges from 18 percent to 50 percent in people with chronic pain. (Themelis, et al., 2023, para. 3). There are many other addictive and deadly products on the market that are readily available to the public, yet no bans have been placed on those products. I believe that instead of banning 7-OH, other steps should be taken to stop children from obtaining it and the adequate labeling of products be enforced to make certain that 7-OH products are as safe to the public as they can be. This way, 7-OH will still be accessible to the people who truly need it.

Sincerely,

Emilia Nye

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