

**PRESS RELEASE FROM
PRESIDING OFFICER DUWAYNE GREGORY**



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Spencer and Gregory's Law Banning Powdered Caffeine Sale to Minors Adopted

A law co-sponsored by Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory and 18th District County Legislator William Spencer that bans the sale of powdered caffeine to minors was unanimously adopted by the Suffolk County Legislature at its meeting today in Riverhead. It is the first ban on sale of powdered caffeine to minors adopted by any municipality in the country.

“Powdered caffeine is a dangerous health threat to everyone, but especially minors,” said PO Gregory. “A single teaspoon of powdered caffeine is the equivalent of 25 cups of coffee, and the potential for overdose and abuse is a clear and present danger. This ban continues the groundbreaking actions of the Suffolk County Legislature, once again setting an example for the rest of the country.”

“The bottom line is that a simple mistake in how powdered caffeine products are used by youth can lead to loss of life. This law will decrease those chances and save lives,” stated Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. “I applaud my colleagues for their support of this bill and for recognizing that like stimulant drinks, these caffeine products are misleading consumers by promising to give extra energy, focus, weight loss, and even increased sports abilities, without addressing the significant dangers that they pose. The health risks are especially hazardous for our youth and even small amounts can lead to overdose and powdered caffeine simply should not be sold to minors.”

“As we wait for the federal and state government to act on protecting our children’s health, we can do more in Suffolk County by supporting IR1727, prohibiting the sale of powdered caffeine to minors. Caffeine in general is an addictive chemical, and with the concentrated powder form we may have a higher level of poisoning concern for our children who may use this product as a recreational drug.”

The legislation drew wide support from health care professionals, including Suffolk County Health Commissioner James Tomarken, and also was supported by the Long Island Chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women.

“This substance has potentially serious detrimental health effects and should be avoided,” said Dr. Tomarken. In a letter of support, Dr. Tomarken reported that the Department of Health Services

issued a Health Bulletin in English and Spanish in August 2014 warning of the dangers of Powered Pure Caffeine, which was adapted from a similar FDA warning that noted the death of a teenager who used this product.

“It is highly concentrated, and therefore it is easy to mistakenly use too much, which could result in an accidental overdose,” said Dr. Tomarken. “I fully support the resolution to prohibit the sale of powdered caffeine to minors in Suffolk County.”

“We feel compelled to raise our voice to urge the passage of the resolution on this most critical issue,” said Wilma Holmes Tootler, president of the Long Island Chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women in a letter of support to PO Gregory prior to the adoption of the law Tuesday. “Our youth are our most important resource and we must preserve and protect them to ensure that they have a viable future. As the U.S Food and Drug Administration has issued a warning about this potentially dangerous product, we applaud your leadership in the fight to save our youth.”