

MINUTES
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 18, 2026

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW20

MEMBERS: Chairman Vander Woude, Vice Chairman Erickson, Representatives Healey, Redman, Wheeler, Beiswenger, Burgoyne, Cayler, Fuhriman, Leavitt, McCann, Thompson, Hall (Stone), Tanner(13), Rubel, Egbert

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Vander Woude called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

H 864: **Rep. Mike Pohanka**, District 26, and **Rep. Erin Bingham**, District 32, presented **H 864**, which amends Idaho's Uniform Controlled Substance Act to classify alkaloids found or derived from *Mitragyna Speciosa* (commonly known as kratom) as Schedule 1 controlled substances. The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved it as a dietary supplement or for any medical use. The substance stimulates opioid receptors, similar to other scheduled drugs, including heroin. Regulation has proven unsuccessful at halting the increasing use and overdose deaths.

Testifying **in support** of **H 864** were: **Shante Sanchez**, Coroner, Bonneville County; **Samuel Hulse**, Sheriff, Bonneville County, Idaho Sheriff's Association.

Their testimonies noted the related deaths showed only the natural kratom products, with no indication of 7-OH or additional substances. Like all opioid products the user's tolerance level and consumption increases, which can lead to toxicity disorders. Restrictions send an erroneous message the natural product is safe. Until the FDA issues a safety notice, a total ban is needed.

The product marketing is targeting kids by selling near high schools as an energy enhancer and in gummies. Kratom targets the same brain receptors as opioids. Penalties for use would be same as opioids.

Testifying **in opposition** to **H 864** were: **Luke Cuccia**, Eagle Creek Ranch Recovery; **Andrea Jackson**, President, Jackson BevCo; **Tyson Baker**, Self; **Laura Romney**, Self; **Christopher Deoudes**, Self; **Grayson Abele**, Toxicologist, TRC; **Gina Rogers**, Self; **Melody Wolf**, Self; **Allie Mathes**, Self; **Brianna Bodey**, Self; **Tremayne Arnold**, President, Capital Distributing.

They expressed concern the natural product is being implicated with the recently appearing synthetic 7-OH products. The withdrawal symptoms are treated the same as heroin addiction. Unlike synthetic 7-OH, kratom has over 450 purity studies. Kratom has been used in other countries for centuries.

Their stories highlighted how kratom use for constant pain allowed them to live full, functional lives. A responsible regulatory framework would protect consumers and preserve use of the natural product. Bans for widely used products encourage unscrupulous dealers, and would criminalize Idahoans suffering with constant physical pain.

Dr. Crystal Pyrak, Idaho Academy of Family Physicians, testified from a **neutral position** to **H 864**, sharing a patient's story and hospitalization to detox from a kratom drink addiction. Without any warning label, the patient assumed it was safe. She suggested a step-away process to include education, clear labeling, and testing.

Due to time constraints, **H 864** and the remaining bills on the agenda will be carried over to the meeting of March 19, 2026, at 8:00 a.m. Testimony will be heard from individuals signed up today. No new testimony will be taken.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Representative Vander Woude
Chair

Irene Moore
Secretary