



**Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams  
Committee on Public Safety jointly with the Committee on Health and the Committee on Mental  
Health, Developmental Disability, Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Disability Services and the  
Committee on Consumer Affairs  
September 21, 2015**

My name is Eric L. Adams, and as the Brooklyn Borough President I represent 2.6 million Brooklynites who call our borough home.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony before this joint committee hearing on the issue of synthetic cannabinoids, also known as synthetic marijuana or K2, and the impact it is having in New York City. I would also like to thank the members of the New York City Council for recognizing the dangers of synthetic marijuana and acting expeditiously to combat the problem.

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 I held a press conference at Brooklyn Borough Hall where I was joined by the Institute for Community Living, NYPD, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and community activists to talk about the dangers of synthetic marijuana. At this press conference, we had a courageous woman, Ms. Della, speak about her addiction to K2, how easy it was for her to access, and the challenges in overcoming the addiction. This is a very dangerous and unnatural compound that is affecting Brooklynites of all walks of life, and can be especially dangerous to those who suffer from mental or emotional disorders. Brooklyn hospitals have seen an influx of K2 related emergency room visits, and members of law enforcement can face challenges when apprehending an individual who is under the influence. K2 poses a serious and potentially lethal danger to our residents.

We have no time to spare in passing legislation to strengthen the laws that will crack down on the importing, manufacturing and distribution of K2. I support the council's legislation that increases the penalties for those caught distributing K2 and including language to include compounds that are altered to circumvent the list of defined banned controlled substances. It is crucial that we close all the legal loopholes to assist with enforcement.

I also am in support of the legislation that will give the city the authority to revoke cigarette licenses and potentially close stores caught selling K2. One of the added dangers of this drug is the low cost and ease of accessibility in corner stores and smoke shops. The drugs are packaged in attractive colorful packages under the names of "Spice", "Mr. Nice Guy", "Green Giant" to name a few.

To further empower and engage citizens in combating this scourge, I recommend that New York City's 311 system make it easier for people to report a retail shop selling K2 by adding it as a menu item on the mobile application. As we all know, one of the easiest ways for a person to receive and send information is through their mobile phone. As it stands right now, the 311 app does not have a drop down menu for illegal drug distribution. Adding this will make it easier for citizens to help enforcement by identifying locations in an effortless manner. A marketing and educational campaign jointly with the NYC Department of Health should also be launched to speak about the dangers of K2, the added function to the 311 app, and the legal ramifications for those caught selling it.

I thank you again for your time on this matter and look forward to working jointly with the New York City Council on efforts to eliminate and eradicate the epidemic of synthetic marijuana sale and use from our streets.