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August 29, 2012

MADIGAN'S OFFICE HOSTS TRAININGS ON SYNTHETIC DRUG ENFORCEMENT***Segment by Illinois State Police Crime Lab Trains Law Enforcement Agencies on Deciphering Synthetic Drug Lab Reports***

Chicago — More than 500 participants joined a series of teleconference trainings today offered by Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office on the unique challenges posed by the explosive growth of deadly synthetic drugs.

"Synthetic Drug Suppression in Illinois – Enforcement and Legal Updates" was presented via three teleconferences Wednesday to law enforcement officers, prosecutors, medical personnel, treatment providers and public health professionals.

"To ensure a strong, effective response to synthetic drugs, law enforcement officials, prosecutors and medical personnel in every county of Illinois need to be armed with up-to-date information," Madigan said. "These trainings will go a long way toward ensuring we're taking a uniform and collaborative approach in fighting this emerging epidemic."

Presenters from Madigan's criminal division, who were joined by members of the State Police crime lab, led the discussion on synthetic drugs, including a segment on how to decipher a synthetic drug laboratory report. Enforcement options under the Illinois Controlled Substance and the Illinois Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act were also detailed, as was a related legislative item that was signed into law on July 31.

The legislation, which Madigan's office drafted and negotiated, amended the Illinois Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act to target the retail sale of synthetic drugs. The new law addresses the fact that synthetic drugs are packaged with misleading labels designed to give the impression that the products are legal and "not intended for human consumption."

The new law defines a "synthetic drug product" as any product containing a controlled substance not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The law makes it a Class 2 felony, punishable by three to seven years in prison and a \$100,000 first offense fine to sell or possess with intent to distribute any form of synthetic drug products in Illinois. The law also significantly increases the penalty for selling or possessing with intent to distribute any drug that is misleadingly labeled, making it a Class 2 felony.

Today's training and the legislative initiative are part of Attorney General Madigan's ongoing work with local police and county sheriffs throughout the state to address the growing use of synthetic drugs, particularly among teens and young adults.

In December 2011, Madigan launched retail store sweeps, known as "Operation Smoked Out," shortly after hosting the state's first emergency summit to increase awareness of synthetic drugs. Since the retail store visits began, store owners across the state have relinquished more than 31,000 packages of synthetic drugs with a street value of almost \$689,000. In June, Madigan hosted a joint meeting with the Indiana Attorney General and law enforcement leaders from Illinois and Indiana to share information gathered and strategies developed by law enforcement agencies in the border states. And last month, investigators from Madigan's office participated in the first-ever coordinated nationwide crackdown on synthetic drugs.

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