

# 3 teens sickened by K2

Legal high that Schumer is calling to ban sends three to a hospital

By [Davelin Roman](#)

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BETHLEHEM — Sen. [Chuck Schumer](#) has called for a nationwide ban on it.

An emergency doctor at [Albany Medical Center Hospital](#) said it can make normally delightful teens "psychotic, violent and paranoid."

On Tuesday, effects of synthetic marijuana took hold at a Glenmont job training center, sending three teens to the hospital.

Police were called to the Glenmont Job Corps on Route 144 about 5:30 p.m. when one teen was banging his head on the ground and "screaming for his God," according to a police report.

Staff at the center told police that student and two others had smoked K2, a synthetic drug that mimics the effects of marijuana.

The teens, none of whom were under 18, were taken to Albany Medical Center Hospital.

Rodney Butler, Glenmont Job Corps director, said the students were hospitalized for observation and released. They are doing well, he said, but are receiving additional care at the facility.

Glenmont Job Corps is a residential program giving students educational and vocational training. It is under the auspices of the state Department of Labor. Students ages 16 to 24 at the Job Corps can live there while preparing for a GED, careers in automotive technology, culinary arts, nursing, facilities management or the military. They can also work toward a college transition.

Police said the three teens in Tuesday's incident will not be charged because, technically, K2 is not illegal. But lawmakers are working to change that.

Last month, Schumer, D-N.Y., held a news conference to call for a nationwide ban on substances like K2, which are marketed as potpourri or incense, but have a nearly identical chemical makeup as marijuana and are often smoked. Schumer supports a federal bill to classify synthetic marijuana products in the same category as heroin and LSD.

The bill has passed the [House of Representatives](#) and is expected to pass the Senate soon.

In 2010, poison control centers across the U.S. reported more than 1,000 calls from patients who used synthetic marijuana products.

At a Feb. 24 news conference, Dr. [Michael Dailey](#), an emergency physician at Albany Medical Center Hospital, said the products are more dangerous than tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the active ingredient in marijuana.

The substances can lead to unusually high blood pressure, extremely fast heart rates, dangerously high temperatures and heart attacks.

Albany County Legislator [Christopher Higgins](#) said he proposed a law last week to ban the synthetic products in the county.

It would ban businesses from selling products that "have a binding activity at one or more cannabinoid receptors" or have been "demonstrated to have binding activity at one or more cannabinoid receptors."

The wording prevents companies from adjusting the formula of the substances to avoid including any banned chemical. Violators could face a fine of \$1,500.

"It's dangerous stuff," Higgins said. "When the wrong kids get it, look at what happens."

Higgins, who represents the Lark Street area in Albany, said the substances are sold openly in bodegas and small markets in his district.

At the Glenmont Job Corps, Butler said the facility has been working to teach youths about how the products will affect their future success in their careers.

"This is an ongoing challenge for society as a whole," he said. "How do we all as a community deal with that? It's not a toy."

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