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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 13, 2018

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KDHE Investigating *Salmonella* Infections Linked to Kratom

TOPEKA, Kan. – The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) has been working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and local health departments to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* associated with kratom. Two cases in Kansas have been associated with this outbreak.

As of April 10, 2018, 132 people infected with outbreak strains of *Salmonella* have been reported from 38 states. Thirty-eight people (40%) have been hospitalized. Kratom-containing products have been tested and reported positive for *Salmonella*. FDA, CDC, and state public health laboratories continue genetic analysis on *Salmonella* recovered from product samples and ill people to determine whether and how they are related.

“The investigation is ongoing. People should be aware that there is a risk for *Salmonella* infection if they are using any form of kratom, especially if they are in a group at higher risk for infection including people with weakened immune systems, pregnant women, young children, and older adults,” said Dr. Farah Ahmed, State Epidemiologist with KDHE.

Kratom is a plant native to Southeast Asia that may be used for its stimulant effects, as an opioid substitute, or as a dietary supplement. It is also known as Thang, Kakuam, Thom, Ketom, and Biak. Individuals have reported consuming kratom in powder form, as pills, in tea, or smoking the substance. Because contamination has been found in products from multiple manufacturers, CDC recommends not using kratom in any form because it could be contaminated with *Salmonella* and cause illness. The FDA has issued several voluntary recalls and one mandatory recall of products containing kratom.

Salmonella infection can cause mild to severe illness. The most common symptoms include diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever. Symptoms typically begin within 12 to 72 hours after exposure to the bacteria but can take as long as 16 days. Symptoms generally resolve without treatment in 4 to 7 days, but some people may require hospitalization. Please contact your health care provider if you think you may have become ill from consuming kratom.

Information on specific product recalls can be found at:
<https://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Outbreaks/ucm597265.htm#consumers>.

To learn more about the outbreak of *Salmonella* infections linked to kratom, please visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/kratom-02-18/index.html> or contact the KDHE Epidemiology Hotline at 1-877-427-7317.

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KDHE's mission is to protect and improve the health and environment of all Kansans.