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Dank, the brand that isn't, scrutinized amid vaping illness

BY MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

LOS ANGELES

It's a widely known vaping cartridge in the marijuana economy, but it's not a licensed brand. And it's got the kind of market buzz no legitimate company would want.

The vaping cartridges that go by the catchy, onesyllable name "Dank" — a slang word for highly potent cannabis — are figuring prominently in the federal investigation to determine what has caused a rash of mysterious and sometimes fatal lung illnesses apparently linked to vaping. Most of the cases have involved products that contain the marijuana compound THC, often obtained from illegal sources.

The suspect Dank vapes are a familiar product in the underground marijuana economy — it's not a legal, tested brand. It's merely a name on a box or a cartridge, packaging that's easily obtained online and used by illicit producers to lure custom-

But with colorful boxes and names like Cherry Kush and Blue Dream, the homemade vapes appear convincing on the shelf.

"It doesn't look very different from what you can buy in a (legal) dispensary," said Beverly Hills-based cannabis attorney Allison Margolin.

So far, investigators have not identified a culprit in the illnesses reported in dozens of states. But officials say patients have mentioned the Dank name frequently. Many of the people who got sick in Illinois and Wisconsin, for



'Dank' packages containing about 75,000 THC vaping cartridges, shown Sept. 23, were seized in a record drug bust in Anoka County, Minn.

example, said they used cartridges sold in Dank packaging.

The raw materials to produce a Dank vape aren't hard to find: Readyto-fill Dank boxes and cartridges can be ordered from Chinese internet sites for pennies apiece. A Craigslist post last week offered a box stuffed with empty Dank packages for \$16. And you can buy the boxes and empty cartridges in shops in downtown Los Angeles.

A rogue producer adds cannabis oil - almost certainly untested - and it's ready for sale.

"It's a generic product name that doesn't really tie back to one store or one distributor," Dr. Jennifer Layden, chief medical officer for the Illinois Department of Public Health, said last month.

The chief selling point for pot vapes in Dank packaging: It's a quick high on the cheap, available for as little as \$20 a gram on the illicit market, roughly onethird of what a customer would pay for a cartridge in a legal marijuana shop in California.

But they come with risk: Products in the legal marijuana market are tested for safety and purity, while those in the illicit market are not and could contain pesticides, heavy metals or other dangerous contami-

According to California records, no licensed company is manufacturing a cannabis vape carrying the Dank name in the state.

Given the shadowy pedigree of Dank vapes, it's not surprising that details about its history are scarce. In California, the Dank name appears to have emerged during the largely unregulated medical cannabis era, prior to broad legalization that began in 2018.

Dispensary owner Jerred Kiloh, who heads the Los Angeles-based United Cannabis Business Association, recalls seeing Dank vapes for the first time about seven years ago.

Last month, Minnesota authorities seized nearly 77,000 THC vaping cartridges, some of which were packaged in Dank



TOWN OF CUTLER BAY NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF AN **ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 3** LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES

The Town of Cutler Bay will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, October 16, 2019 at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as possible, in the Town Hall Council Chambers, 10720 Caribbean Boulevard, Cutler Bay, Florida. The purpose of the public hearing is to consider the adoption of the Ordinance described below:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CUTLER BAY, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 3 LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES BY AMENDING SECTION 3-60 TC, TOWN CENTER DISTRICT TO PERMIT MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES WITHIN THE TC, TOWN CENTER **SUB-DISTRICT**; **PROVIDING EDGE** SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Town Council may continue or defer the hearing to a new date and time certain without further notice provided the date and time of the continuance or deferral is announced at the hearing. The Ordinance in its entirety may be inspected at the Office of the Town Clerk during regular business hours.

Persons wishing to appeal any decisions made by the Town Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing will need a record of the proceedings and; for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made; which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based (F.S. 286.0105).

Any and all interested parties may appear at the above meeting and be heard with respect to the proposed items.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), persons needing special accommodations to participate in these proceedings should contact the Town Clerk's Office for assistance at (305) 234-4262, no later than four (4) business days prior to such proceeding.

Debra E. Eastman, MMC Town Clerk

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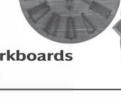
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