



## SB 1502 – Use of Xylazine Prevention Act

*Regulating xylazine accessibility and preventing misuse*

### SUMMARY

SB 1502 adds xylazine, also known as “tranq” or the “zombie drug,” to the list of Schedule III controlled substances. This schedule allows law enforcement in the state of California to restrict access to this medication, while protecting its use for veterinary medicine.

### BACKGROUND

Xylazine is a non-opiate sedative, analgesic, and muscle relaxant only authorized in the United States for veterinary use. It is not currently a controlled substance under the U.S. Controlled Substances Act.

However, the human consumption of xylazine has been reported in several states, including California.<sup>1</sup> According to a DEA Joint Intelligence Report published in October 2022, Xylazine-related deaths are increasing drastically in every region of the nation, more than tripling from 2020 to 2021.<sup>1</sup>

Frequent xylazine use is associated with a higher prevalence of abscesses, ulcers, and infections, potentially leading to amputation or fatal overdose.<sup>1</sup> Affects associated with xylazine use include hypertension, and tachycardia followed by reduced heart rate, hypothermia, coma, respiratory depression, and dysrhythmia.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, users may develop a physical dependence to xylazine. Some report the withdrawal symptoms as severe as, or more severe than, those from heroin or methadone. Symptoms include sharp chest pains and seizures.<sup>1</sup>

### THE PROBLEM

Xylazine is increasingly found in the illicit drug supply, as drug traffickers are using it as an additive for other opioids to increase their profits. A combination of xylazine and fentanyl can place users at a higher risk of a fatal drug overdose.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike with opiate overdoses, naloxone, or “Narcan”, cannot reverse a xylazine overdose, making this the **deadliest drug combination in the United States**. In fact, there is no approved treatment to reverse the effects of xylazine on humans.<sup>5</sup> Treatment with naloxone will only counteract the effects of the opioid in a mixture, meaning the victim may require additional measures to survive. Responders may not be aware that xylazine intoxication is a factor and as a result may not know to apply additional life-saving methods when naloxone only partially reverses the symptoms. This deadly mixture has been linked to rising overdose deaths across the country.

Most troubling is the ease in which someone can acquire xylazine. While xylazine can be purchased legitimately through pharmaceutical distributors and websites catering to veterinarians, it is also readily available for purchase online to non-veterinary customers. A kilogram of xylazine powder can be purchased online from Chinese suppliers for as little as \$6 per kilogram<sup>1</sup>, making it easier for drug traffickers to mix xylazine into their drug supply.

### THE SOLUTION

SB 1502 will prevent the illicit use of xylazine by listing it as a Schedule III substance, while still creating guardrails for the drug’s continued use in veterinary medicine practice. Scheduling xylazine will allow state law enforcement to monitor the substance and prevent its illicit use. This bill also contains an exemption, which will allow compounding pharmacies to produce xylazine, under FDA guidelines, for veterinary use in the event of a supply shortage.

It is crucial that we protect Californians from the negative impacts of xylazine, and SB 1502 ensures the health and safety of our communities by regulating its availability and preventing its misuse.

<sup>1</sup> [DEA Joint Intelligence Report](#)

<sup>2</sup> [CA Department of Public Health](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CDC - Xylazine](#)

<sup>4</sup> [CDPH - Opioid Crisis](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Xylazine - Overdose Cases on the Rise](#)

## **SUPPORT**

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Mayor Todd Gloria, City of San Diego (sponsor)  
California Veterinary Medical Association  
California Coalition of School Safety Professionals  
League of California Cities  
California Narcotic Officers Association

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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