

Opinion | Kratom has given me a better life. Michigan needs regulation

by Melody Woolf September 20, 2022

[Melody Woolf](#) May 20, 2026

Fifteen years ago, my life was turned upside down when I started experiencing chronic pain. A combination of arthritis, spinal stenosis, fibromyalgia and more left me bedridden and every medical option suggested by experts at various institutions like the University of Michigan and Michigan State University left me in the same situation. I was bedridden and for years was resigned to relying on a wheelchair or a walker to get around. I couldn't be present for my children growing up, missing their concerts and plays and leaving them to rely on other parents if they wanted to do anything after school, until I stumbled upon [kratom](#) and its different uses.



Melody Woolf is a Kalamazoo resident and an advocate for kratom regulation in Michigan and nationally. (courtesy photo)

Kratom helped me to regain my life and is now the subject of a bill that was recently passed by the Michigan House of Representatives, [HB 5477](#). Millions of other Americans like me use kratom for many different wellness purposes, including increasing energy, managing anxiety and depression and alleviating withdrawal symptoms.

Research published earlier this year found that kratom is [considerably safer](#) than drugs like opioids and [ongoing research](#) at the University of Florida is exploring whether kratom could be a tool in addressing the opioid crisis. The science speaks for itself — Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, has been vocal in her [support for continued research](#) on the safety of kratom.

Today, thanks to kratom, I lead an active, happy life. I volunteer for causes that are important to me, like at a children's foundation visiting hospital wards. I go on long bike rides with my husband on the trails around Kalamazoo and have been camping under the stars out west. I was able to dance the night away at my son's wedding. This year, I have been providing full-time childcare for my 9-month-old granddaughter and we have been enjoying weekly trips to the zoo where I am able to push her around in her stroller for hours. I am an active part of my family's life, which is something I couldn't say before.

My story is just one example of why there should be continued research and regulation into kratom and its uses. Kratom has helped me and my family significantly, and I want to make sure that anyone struggling to find solutions elsewhere can have safe, continued access to kratom.

Many other states are actively considering similar regulations to Michigan's HB 5477, and regulations have been enacted in seven states already, including [Colorado](#) and [Oregon](#) just this year. These bills ensure that all kratom products are safe by setting strict product standards and setting measures to keep bad actors out of the industry, as well as mandating that these products are only sold to adults.

Keeping kratom consumers needs to be a critical concern for all elected officials in Michigan. I urge the Michigan Senate and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to swiftly join the House in support of this important regulation to protect kratom consumers across the state of Michigan

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