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SHERIFF
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Media Release

From: **Cpl. Michael Terry**
Deputy PIO, 352-797-3608

Re: **Hernando High Teacher/Football Coach Arrested for Providing Kratom to Student – 2025-00202649**

Date: **May 19, 2025**

On 05-09-2025, a Hernando County Sheriff's Office school resource deputy responded to a classroom on the campus of Hernando High School in reference to a 17-year-old student who appeared to be having a medical emergency.

Upon making contact with the student, the deputy advised that the student was unresponsive with a rapid pulse, shallow breathing, and was hot to the touch. The deputy then performed a sternum rub, which the student responded to by sitting up and saying he was hot.

Vitals taken at the school showed the student had an elevated heart rate and blood pressure.

The student advised that he took an herbal supplement provided to him by a teacher, later identified as **Terry Kennedy DOB/12-19-1977**.

The student advised that he saw the teacher use the supplement previously as an energy booster, and asked Kennedy if he could have some. Kennedy provided the student with two packets of the Kratom-based supplement. The student ingested both packets along with a soda.

Kratom produces stimulant-like effects, and is illegal for juveniles to possess or consume.

The student, who went to his next class, began to experience symptoms of distress shortly after taking the supplement. The student was transported to a local hospital for further treatment and observation.

During questioning, Kennedy, who also coaches football, advised he provided the supplement to the student at the student's request. Kennedy said he was aware the supplement contained Kratom.

On 05-16-2025, a warrant was issued for Kennedy's arrest on a charge of **Furnishing a Kratom Product to a Juvenile**, a misdemeanor. On 05-17-2025, Kennedy turned himself in at the Lake County Detention Center. His bond was set at $500.

Terry Kennedy

Hernando County Crime Stoppers / Anonymous Tips

If you have information on this case, please contact Hernando County Crime Stoppers. You will remain anonymous!

Hernando County Crime Stoppers can be reached by phone at 1-866-990-TIPS (8477) or **TIPS from a cell phone.

You may also submit your tip via the internet at http://www.hernandocountycrimestoppers.com .

You will remain anonymous and also be eligible for a reward up to $5,000 cash!