

STRIPED

Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders

A PUBLIC HEALTH
INCUBATOR



Sept. 10, 2015

Dear Honorable Members of the Massachusetts State Legislature:

We are writing to respectfully request your support of H.3471, important legislation that would protect minors across the state by regulating the sale of dietary supplements for weight loss or muscle building. The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Kay Khan, would ban the sale of these products to minors under the age of 18 years, and move them from open shelves to behind the counter – requiring consumers to request these products directly from a pharmacist or other store supervisory personnel. We hope that you will co-sponsor this legislation and join us in addressing this critical public health issue!

We have all seen dietary supplements at our local pharmacies and grocery stores. While these products often make claims to promote weight loss or muscle building, many dietary supplements are sold in the United States without any scientific evidence supporting their efficacy or safety. Dietary supplements are inadequately regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), leaving consumer safety at risk. Even more alarming, these deceptive and sometimes dangerous products often end up in the hands of our youth.

The dangers of dietary supplements made national headlines earlier this year. The *New York Times* highlighted recent findings from a scientific study that found a chemical nearly identical to amphetamine, a stimulant, in almost a dozen popular weight-loss and workout supplements sold nationwide. In a recent *Harvard Public Health Review* commentary, Harvard Medical School researchers exposed the unacceptable reality that supplements sold in the United States can be legally promoted for weight loss without scientific evidence backing the product's claims.

To date, research findings suggest that more than 30 percent of children and adolescents take dietary supplements on a regular basis. Additionally, 6% of girls and 4% of boys report using diet products within the past month without a doctor's advice. Research has documented dire health consequences, including liver damage and even death among young athletes and other users of some brands of supplements promising weight loss and muscle building.

Please join us in our campaign to protect young people and other vulnerable consumers in the Commonwealth by supporting H.3471.

Please contact us at MAhousebill3471@gmail.com with any questions.

Thank you for your support,

S. Bryn Austin, ScD, Director, Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders

Beth Mayer, LICSW, Executive Director, Multi-Service Eating Disorders Association

Kerry Dolan, STAR Program Manager, National Eating Disorders Association

Academy for Eating Disorders

Eating Disorders Clinical and Research Program at Massachusetts General Hospital

Eating Disorders Coalition

Eating Disorders Collaborative of Massachusetts

Fenway Health

Hynes Recovery Services