

# Fact Sheet

## Protect the Health of Massachusetts' Children

IF PASSED, H.2215/S.1465 WOULD COST STATE AN ESTIMATED ONE-TIME COST OF ONLY \$47,536 UPON IMPLEMENTATION



### The Problem



- **Youth are at risk.** A new study by Hall et al. found that nearly 1 in 10 adolescents have used ineffective and potentially harmful over-the-counter diet pills and similar products misused for weight loss in their lifetimes. Prevalence of use among adolescents was 2.0% in the past week, 4.4% in the past month, 6.2% in the past year, and 8.9% in their lifetime.<sup>(1)</sup>
- **Dangerous products.** Over-the-counter diet pills and muscle-building dietary supplements carry serious risks, including organ failure, heart attack, stroke, testicular cancer, and even death.<sup>(2-5)</sup> Some contain illegal steroids, pharmaceutical drugs, or heavy metals.<sup>(6)</sup> The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly cautions against teens using over-the-counter diet pills<sup>(7)</sup> or muscle-building supplements for any reason.<sup>(8)</sup>
- **Weak federal regulation.** Supplements are taken off shelves by the Food and Drug Administration only after reports of serious injury.<sup>(9)</sup> In 2015, attorneys general of 14 states, including Massachusetts, joined in a [letter](#) to Congress seeking a federal investigation into dietary supplements, but still no federal action has been taken.<sup>(10)</sup> Massachusetts' youth need greater protection now.

### Urgent Action Needed by Massachusetts Lawmakers



- **The Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders** urges state leaders to protect young people from the dangers of over-the-counter diet pills and muscle-building supplements. If signed into law, **H.2215/S.1465** would ban the sale of over-the-counter diet pills and muscle-building supplements to minors under 18 years old and move these products behind the counter, as already done for other dangerous products such as tobacco and pseudoephedrine. New York State has already passed a similar law, which takes effect in April 2024.

### Recent Study by Brandeis Economists Demonstrates Low Startup Cost for Implementation



- **The study aimed to evaluate the value of implementing a state-level ban on sales of over-the-counter diet pills and muscle-building supplements to minors.**
  - The study gathered data through key informant interviews and public data on state websites.
  - The study considered minimum, best, and maximum values for state personnel time and salaries needed for all key provisions of the legislation.
- **Results: One-time implementation opportunity cost** estimated to be **only \$47,536**, which is less than a starting salary of a state administrative staff position.<sup>(11)</sup>

**Read the full study here:**

[Tschanpl CA, Lee MR, Raffoul A, Santoso M, Austin SB. Economic Value of Initial Implementation Activities for Proposed Ban on Sales of Over-The-Counter Diet Pills and Muscle-Building Supplements to Minors. AJPM Focus. 2023;2\(3\):100103](#)

**Given the bill's strong potential to provide urgently needed protection for youth and the demonstrated low cost of implementation for the Commonwealth, we urge your support for H.2215/S.1465.**

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### References

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11. [Tschampl CA, Lee MR, Raffoul A, Santoso M, Austin SB. Economic Value of Initial Implementation Activities for Proposed Ban on Sales of Over-The-Counter Diet Pills and Muscle-Building Supplements to Minors. AJPM Focus. 2023 Apr 29;2\(3\):100103.](#)

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