

Oct. 12, 2017

Dear Honorable Members of the Massachusetts State Legislature:

We are writing to respectfully request your support of **H.1195, “An Act protecting children from harmful diet pills and muscle-building supplements,”** important legislation that would protect minors across the state by regulating the sale of dietary supplements for weight loss and muscle building. The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Kay Khan along with 20 co-sponsors, would prevent the sale of these products to minors under the age of 18 years and move them from open shelves to behind the counter, as currently done with other dangerous products such as tobacco. We hope that we can count on you for your support of this legislation and join us in addressing this critical public health and adolescent health issue.

We have all seen shelves full of 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 frequently make national headlines. In July of this year a widely reported study documented a 50% increase over the past decade in calls to poison control centers because of illness and injuries caused by dietary supplements, many of which were sold for weight loss. The *New York Times* highlighted another 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.1195.

Please contact us at [STRIPED@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:STRIPED@hsph.harvard.edu) with any questions.

Thank you for your support,

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Academy for Eating Disorders  
Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness  
Binge Eating Disorders Association  
Eating Disorders Clinical and Research Program of Massachusetts General Hospital  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
Fenway Health  
Hynes Recovery Services  
Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Project Heal  
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine  
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