



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHAIN DRUG STORES

March 5, 2010

To the Honorable Members of the Alaska State House of Representatives Judiciary
Committee
Juneau, Alaska

RE: House Bill 327 – Dextromethorphan (DXM) sales restrictions

Dear Members of the House of Representatives:

On behalf of the members of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) operating in the State of Alaska, I am offering this letter of opposition to House Bill 327 – sales restrictions on common cold products containing Dextromethorphan. Members of NACDS operating in Alaska include: Costco, Walgreens and Wal-Mart. These three companies operate 14 of the 45 chain pharmacies operating in Alaska. Collectively community pharmacy (chain and independents) employ over 8,300 full and part-time employees and pay in excess of \$8 million in state and local taxes.

Dextromethorphan is a safe and effective ingredient found in over 100 over-the-counter cough and cold products. First approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in the 1950's, it is an effective, **non-narcotic** cough suppressant that works by raising the coughing threshold in the brain. It has no pain relieving properties and is **not addictive**.

With this in mind, the members of NACDS respectfully oppose the passage of House Bill 327 for the following reasons:

- ❖ **DXM is vastly different from pseudoephedrine (PSE).**
 - DXM is not addictive, and cannot be converted into an addictive substance.
 - DXM abusers usually do not commit crimes related to DXM abuse.
 - DXM is abused for a quick high that is not physically addictive.
- ❖ **Unlike PSE, there is no practical alternative to DXM available.**
 - There are no other FDA-approved over-the-counter cough suppressants available in the United States.
- ❖ **The issue of teen substance abuse must be the focus of legislators, as DXM is not unsafe.**
 - Parents must be involved in the actions of their children.
 - Legislators should focus on educating parents, teachers, coaches, and teens about the dangers of drug abuse, including DXM.
 - Teens are also known to abuse household aerosols, cleaning fluids, glue, gasoline and other products that produce a “high.” Teen abuse is not limited to DXM only. The bigger picture of product abuse should be addressed.

- According to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, children who “learn a lot about the risks of drugs” from their parents are up to half as likely to use them. Only 32% of teens “learn a lot about the risks of drugs” from their parents.
 - According to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, teens reasons for using DXM are “to get high” and “to deal with stress and depression.”
- ❖ **DXM is an inherently safe product. To experience a hallucinogenic effect, one must take a dose *approximately 25 times the recommended adult dose.***
- DXM has few side effects when taken in therapeutic doses.
 - DXM is not addictive, even when taken in massive doses.
 - DXM is used to suppress coughing in people of all ages, from infants to the elderly.
 - DXM has very few contraindications. It can be taken by almost any patient suffering from almost any disease state.
 - DXM interacts with very few medications; it can be taken safely by almost anyone taking almost any medication.
 - Because it is non-addictive, DXM must be readily available for anyone with a cough or cold that has a problem with addiction to drugs or alcohol.

NACDS along with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America continues to work to educate parents and families as to the potential abuse of medicines containing DXM.

Please set this bill aside and assist us in promoting an educational component instead of taking away the ability to procure legitimate cold products in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,

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