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May 1, 2017

The Honorable Mitch Greenlick  
Chair, House Committee on Health Care  
State of Oregon  
900 Court St. NE, Room 453  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Support for Senate Bill 743 – Relating to dextromethorphan**

Dear Chairman Greenlick,

I am writing on behalf of the Consumer Healthcare Products Association in support of Senate Bill 743, which would prohibit the sale of products containing dextromethorphan (DXM) to those under the age of 18 unless they hold a valid prescription.

CHPA is the 136-year-old trade association representing the leading manufacturers and marketers of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and dietary supplements. Every dollar spent by consumers on OTC medicines saves the U.S. healthcare system \$6-\$7, contributing a total of \$102 billion in savings each year. CHPA is committed to empowering consumer self-care by preserving and expanding choice and availability of consumer healthcare products.

Dextromethorphan is a safe and effective ingredient found in more than 100 over-the-counter cough and cold products. First approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 1954, it is a non-narcotic cough suppressant that works by raising the coughing threshold in the brain; it has no pain relieving properties and is not addictive. While dextromethorphan is used safely by millions of Americans each year to relieve coughs due to the common cold or flu, a small but significant number of teens are intentionally abusing medicines containing DXM.

At CHPA, we take seriously our obligation to educate parents, community leaders and those who shape public policy about what can be done to prevent the unnecessary – and often unanticipated – harm caused by the abuse of medicine. For too many parents, knowing that their children are not involved with illicit street drugs provides a sense of security that allows them to miss the potential for abuse in their own medicine cabinet.

According to the 2016 Monitoring the Future Study<sup>1</sup>, approximately three percent of teens abuse cough medicines containing DXM to get high. When ingested in high doses – as much as 25 times the recommended amount – side effects can include confusion, dizziness, double or blurred vision, slurred speech, loss of physical coordination vomiting and rapid heartbeat.

Our industry supports the efforts of both state and federal lawmakers as well as the efforts of the retail community to implement sales restrictions prohibiting the purchase of products containing

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse; <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/data/16data/16drtbl2.pdf>

dextromethorphan by those under the age of 18. To date, twelve states, including Oregon's neighbors in California and Washington, have passed similar legislation, giving parents greater control over their children's access to medicines. Similar measures are currently under consideration in Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas.

While age restrictions serve as a major step forward in reducing teen medicine abuse, education is still paramount to preventing its abuse. We are spearheading several major campaigns to raise awareness of dextromethorphan abuse, including the comprehensive web site [www.StopMedicineAbuse.org](http://www.StopMedicineAbuse.org).

The Stop Medicine Abuse campaign is one tool for educating and engaging parents to combat the issue of medicine abuse. In 2009, CHPA launched StopMedicineAbuse.org while manufacturers voluntarily placed the below icon on the packaging of cough medicines containing DXM, pointing parents to the website. This site provides parents with tips for speaking with their teens and safeguarding their medicine cabinets, both of which are proven methods to curb teen medicine abuse. The Stop Medicine Abuse campaign is also active on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.



We commend the Senate Committee on Health Care for introducing S.B. 743. The leading makers of OTC cough medicines have been working to raise awareness about this problem and are pleased to see such strong leadership from the Oregon legislature on this issue.

CHPA and our members remain committed to effectively addressing the issue of medicine abuse. By prohibiting the sale of products containing DXM to those under the age of 18, S.B. 743 is an effective tool in helping prevent medicine abuse among teens. We respectfully urge the committee to **support S.B. 743**. If you have any questions regarding our position, please contact me directly or CHPA's in-state counsel, Mr. John Powell (John Powell & Associates) at 503-378-7630 or [john@johnpowell.us](mailto:john@johnpowell.us).

Respectfully submitted,

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cc: Vice Chair Representative Cedric Hayden  
Vice Chair Representative Rob Nosse  
Members, House Committee on Health Care