

# OUT OF KIDS' HANDS

## HOW AGE LIMITS ON DIET PILL SALES COULD SAVE CALIFORNIA HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS

In California, eating disorders cost the state

**\$7.8**  
BILLION

every year.<sup>1</sup>



### ! Youth are at risk...

Nearly 1 in 10 adolescents have used misleading & potentially harmful over-the-counter (OTC) diet pills in their lifetimes,<sup>2</sup> while 19% of young men & 7% of young women<sup>3</sup> report using muscle-building supplements.

### ! These products are dangerous...

Due to weak federal oversight, these products have repeatedly been found to be laced with dangerous ingredients, including illegal steroids, pharmaceutical drugs, excessive stimulants & heavy metals,<sup>4</sup> causing serious risks.<sup>5-11</sup> A rigorous review concluded “the use of natural supplements for weight loss are unlikely to contribute to meaningful weight loss and in some cases may contribute to harm”<sup>12</sup> - including liver & kidney failure.

### ! The FDA's hands are tied...

By law, the FDA can act only after reports of serious risk or injury,<sup>11</sup> warning the public that they are “unable to test and identify all products marketed as dietary supplements” & that “consumers should exercise caution before purchasing any product,”<sup>13-14</sup> but still no federal action has been taken!

### Expert economists say implementation cost of this legislation likely to be minimal!<sup>15</sup>

Health economists from The Heller School for Social Policy and Management from Brandeis University carried out a study to estimate the cost of implementing a state-level ban on sales of OTC diet pills and muscle-building supplements to minors by gathering data through key informant interviews and public data on state websites.

#### What they found...

The one-time implementation opportunity cost was estimated to be **only \$5,640 of the FY25 state budget** - so *virtually nothing!*

This legislation is likely to amount to a minimal 1-time implementation cost of **virtually nothing!**



### These same expert economists also say this legislation could save the state hundreds of millions!

- Modeled cost-effectiveness of the age-restriction policy vs. current law using two closed cohorts of males & females aged 0-17 years in California.

#### What they found...

- Their cost-effectiveness study estimated:
  - This legislation would prevent over 180,000 eating disorder cases and more than 270,000 other adverse medical events over 30 years.
  - Also it would yield annual healthcare savings of **\$134 million** and annual societal savings of **\$236 million**.

This legislation is likely to annually yield **\$134 million** in healthcare & **\$236 million** in societal savings!

# REFERENCES

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