



Better health for New Zealanders through the development of responsible self-medication

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Banning pseudoephedrine is not the answer to P problem

The New Zealand Self-Medication Industry (NZSMI), the industry body representing non-prescription consumer healthcare products, said today that a potential ban on over-the-counter sales of cold tablets that contain pseudoephedrine was not the answer to this country's growing methamphetamine drug (known as P) problem.

"The problem is not pseudoephedrine, it is methamphetamine. Pseudoephedrine-based medications are perfectly safe and effective when used as directed. If you ban pseudoephedrine sales in pharmacies it will not solve the P manufacturing problem," says NZSMI executive director, Mr Tim Roper.

Mr Roper says the vast majority of illicit product used to manufacture P is imported illegally.

He maintains further restrictions on pharmaceutical products containing pseudoephedrine risk serious disadvantage to thousands of New Zealanders with no assurance they would curtail the spread of illegal drugs.

Mr Roper says further restrictions on pseudoephedrine in cold and 'flu' preparations, such as making them prescription-only, would cause widespread inconvenience in the community.

"It would force thousands of cold and 'flu' sufferers to take time off work, and would result in many people making unnecessary and costly visits to GPs.

"If the drugs were to become prescription-only all pharmacies would have to stock them, making all pharmacies a target for criminals again. Currently, not everyone has them," he says.

Mr Roper says that his organisation favours introducing Project Stop to curb the illicit diversion of pseudoephedrine from pharmacies.

"Project Stop is software that monitors purchasing data in live time. It has already proven successful in significantly reducing the problem in Queensland and has now been mandated for installation in every pharmacy in that state," says Roper.

Mr Roper says that although there are no clinical trials to show that pseudoephedrine-based medication is more effective as a nasal decongestant than remedies made with an alternative ingredient, phenylephrine there is a large amount of anecdotal evidence to support this view.

Ends

About SMI: The New Zealand Self-Medication Industry Association Inc (SMI) is the national trade association representing manufacturers, marketers and distributors of a wide range of products, generally available "over-the-counter" (OTC) and mainly for use in self-medication by New Zealand consumers. SMI's mission is to promote better health through responsible self-care. This means ensuring that safe and effective self-care products are readily available to all New Zealanders at a reasonable cost. SMI works to encourage responsible use by consumers and an increasing role for cost-effective self-medication products as part of the broad national health strategy.

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New Zealand Self-Medication Industry Association Inc.

