

May 3, 2012
 252 Summit Ave.
 Buffalo, NY 14214

HHS

Honorable Lynn Marinelli
 Erie County Legislature
 1701 Hertel Ave.
 Buffalo, NY 14216

Dear Legislator Marinelli,

I am writing to request the opportunity to address the next meeting of the Erie County Legislature's Health and Human Services Committee regarding widespread concern about cough medicine abuse. I ask that Erie County pass legislation to put products containing Dextromethorphan behind the pharmacy counter. I further ask that the Legislature pass a resolution of strong support for a bill in the New York State Legislature, S 6085 A, Grisanti / A 9601, Jaffee that would put products containing "DXM" behind the counter.

Dextromethorphan (DXM) is widely used by young people to experience an LSD-like experience. Approximately 10% of young people indicate that they have gotten high with cough medicine. DXM is too dangerous to be so accessible. Someone I know very well started abusing Robitussin "robo-tripping" last year. He subsequently became suicidal and was taken to the emergency room. He quit his job, and became very unstable to live with. Even with parental vigilance it was impossible to keep him from buying or lifting it in any number of grocery, drug, or convenience stores. At age 20, he could not purchase beer at the store, but he repeatedly purchased numerous containers of cough medicine with no questions asked.

He became more and more sick, then psychotic, and spent 10 days in a psychiatric hospital. Each year there are approximately 10,000 emergency room visits attributable to cough medicine. Permanent brain damage, deadly accidents, and criminal behavior have been associated with cough medicine abuse.

We can change this. There is literally room for products containing DXM, behind the pharmacy counter, next to another category of medicine put there to prevent its being converted into Methamphetimine. I would be pleased to work with you and your staff to help in any way. Please contact me at (716) 698-9602, or kcastillo@cks.edu.

Sincerely,
 Kathleen M. Castillo

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