

Subj: **The Supplement Industry**
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The lack of regulation in the supplement industry poses a great risk to our athletes on many levels. The FDA does not regulate supplements as they regulate food and other medications. The contents of a supplement do not have to match what is listed on the label. This opens the door for a positive drug test as the substances that are included may be prohibited. The athlete is also at risk from health problems that may arise from the ingredients. Therefore, the IOC considers supplements to be taken at your own risk.

Because of the great impact this has on the health and careers of our athletes and the integrity of our sport, USA Swimming joined CASPER (The Coalition for Steroid Precursor and Ephedrine Regulation) this spring. Please read the information about CASPER (below) and learn more about how this affects you and USA Swimming athletes:

What is Casper? (Taken from Press Release from USADA)
 CASPER is comprised of the nation's leading medical, public health and sport organizations, and is focused on supporting efforts to regulate products containing steroid precursors and products containing ephedra. CASPER was initially founded to support The Anabolic Steroid Precursor Control and Health Education Act (H.R. 207), which was co-sponsored by Rep. John Sweeney (R-N.Y.) and Rep. Tom Osborne (R-Neb.).

Steroid precursors are substances that are converted in the body into steroids which have an anabolic effect. The steroid precursors are themselves steroids. In almost all cases, the substances formed in the body from steroid precursors that are responsible for their advertised actions are scheduled under the Controlled Substances Act. Ephedra use in a small but significant number of otherwise healthy individuals has been associated with heart attack, stroke, and psychoses. In specific circumstances, it has been associated with death. The increased use of these substances increases the risk that otherwise healthy individuals will have an adverse medical event.

"The Coalition for Anabolic Steroid Precursor and Ephedra Regulation was formed to coordinate the efforts of the top U.S. medical, public health and sport organizations with an end result of changing the laws and regulations regarding the exclusion of steroid precursors and ephedra in dietary supplements," said Shawn Smeallie, CASPER Executive Director. The Anabolic Steroid Precursor Control and Health Education Act was co-sponsored by congressmen John Sweeney (R-N.Y.) and Tom Osborne (R-Neb.) in October 2002. It was reintroduced in January 2003 as H.R. 207. The proposed bill would apply to substances that, once ingested, metabolize in the body into anabolic steroids.

Currently, these anabolic steroid precursors are being marketed as anabolic-equivalent "dietary supplements" that promise to magically build muscle. The manufacturers of these products are not required to perform any safety testing prior to releasing these potentially dangerous steroid equivalents. To correct this situation, Rep. Sweeney and Rep. Osborne moved quickly to draft the new legislation reclassifying anabolic steroid precursors as controlled substances.

"The use of these dangerous supplements has become a serious health issue for the American public as a whole," said Rep. Sweeney. "We cannot allow their abuse to simultaneously ruin the health of those who have been duped into using them for everything from the promise of quick-fix weight

loss to that of a magic muscle powder, as well as degrade the competitive spirit of athletic competition."

"I'm pleased with the creation of CASPER and its mission. It works to spread the word about important efforts and legislation geared to protect young athletes and non-athletes," Rep. Osborne said. "We need to make sure that steroid precursor manufacturers are no longer able to exploit teenagers, athletes and unsuspecting consumers by selling them untested, unregulated steroid equivalents, labeled 'dietary supplements.'"

By joining CASPER, USA Swimming is supporting the efforts of Congressmen Sweeney and Osborne as they work to pass bill HR 207.

What can you do?

By following these links you will be able to email your Representative (<http://www.house.gov/writerep>) or all Representatives (DearColleague@mail.house.gov) asking him or her to support this legislation, and/or contact Representative Sweeney (<http://www.house.gov/sweeney/contacts/index.htm>) and Representative Osborne (<http://www.house.gov/osborne/contact.htm>) thanking them for introducing this legislation. You can either type your own message or you can paste in the message below as a starting point. In either case, please be sure to reference H.R. 207 in the subject line of your email.

Click here (Word - 21 KB) to download a sample letter.
<http://www.casper207.com/files/supportLetter.doc>

The lack of regulations in the supplement industry can cost your athletes their careers and/or their health. For more information please visit the USA Swimming supplement database and drug control section at www.usa-swimming.org

If you have any questions/concerns do not hesitate to contact me. This has been shared with all Out-of-Competition drug testing athletes, their coaches and all Committee Chairs as well.

Sincerely,

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