Consumers Union
Dietary Supplements Survey

June 4, 2004

Methodology

- **A total of 1,221 online surveys were conducted among a random sample of U.S. adults. The margin of error at a 95% confidence level is +/- 3 percentage points.**
- **Interviewing took place over May 12-17.**
- **Figures cited in the analysis are top-two box (*strongly agree* or *agree*).**
- **Regional definitions**
  - → **Northeast: CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT**
  - → **Midwest: IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI**
  - → **South: AK, AL, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV**
  - → **West: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY**

Introduction

Respondent Introduction

In April, a federally mandated ban on the dietary supplement Ephedra went into effect after the supplement was linked to more than 150 deaths. Consumer Reports recently identified at least a dozen other dietary supplements still on the market that pose serious risks to consumers, with links to kidney failure, liver disease and cancer.

Unlike over-the-counter and prescription drugs, which must be proven safe and effective before they can be sold to the public, dietary supplements can be marketed without demonstrating similar proof of safety. Also, dietary supplement producers do not have to report serious health reactions caused by their products to the federal government or put safety warnings on supplement labels, even for products with known serious hazards.

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree):

- **Poorly regulated dietary supplements pose a risk to me and my family's health.**
- **Before dietary supplements can be sold, they should be proven safe and effective, the same as prescription drugs.**
- **Producers of dietary supplements should be required to report adverse health reactions to their products, the same as for prescription drugs.**
- **Dietary supplement labels should include product risk information, as prescription drug labels do.**
- **Dietary supplements should not face increased regulation.**

Results and Analysis

- **Concern about dietary supplements was broader than for any other issue in this study. Agreement varied little by gender, age, income or region of residence.**
  - → **More than 8 in 10 respondents agree that poor regulation of supplements posed a personal risk.**
  - → **More than 9 in 10 want the sale of supplements to be conditioned on safety and efficacy.**
  - → **Virtually everyone agree that supplement producers should be required to report adverse events.**
  - → **Similarly, 96% want product risk information on dietary supplement labels.**
  - → **Fewer than 1 in 5 respondents feel that supplements already are sufficiently regulated.**

Top-Two Box: Agreement With Dietary Supplements Questions [4 boxes]

		Gender		Age			Income			Region			
	Total	Men	Women	18-44	45-64	65+	<$60K	$60-99K	$100K+	NE	MW	SO	WE
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Poorly regulated dietary supplements pose a risk to me and my family's health.	81	79	83	80	81	85	81	84	85	82	81	83	79
Before dietary supplements can be sold, they should be proven safe and effective, the same as prescription drugs.	91	91	92	91	91	94	94	90	88	92	94	91	90
Producers of dietary supplements should be required to report adverse health reactions to their products, the same as for prescription drugs.	96	97	97	96	97	98	97	97	97	97	99	96	97
Dietary supplement labels should include product risk information, as prescription drug labels do.	96	95	98	96	96	98	97	96	96	96	98	96	97
Dietary supplements should not face increased regulation.	19	22	18	20	20	12	18	19	21	22	19	18	22

Base: Total Answering