



Testimony

of the

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

before the

New York City Council Committee on Health

on

Int. 599-2014: Posting of information and warnings regarding anabolic steroids and human growth hormone in locker rooms.

and

T-2015 – 2857: Technical changes to certain pet shop requirements, as added by local laws 5 and 7 for the year 2015.

and

T 2015 – 2868: Technical changes to certain pet shop requirements, as added by local laws 6 and 8 for the year 2015.

April 21, 2015
Council Chambers – City Hall
New York City

Good morning Chairman Johnson and members of the Health Committee. On behalf of Commissioner Bassett, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on: Introduction 599, legislation that would require the posting of information and warnings regarding anabolic steroids and human growth hormone in locker rooms; in addition, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on T 2015-2857 and T 2015-2868, bills that make technical changes to the pet shop-related legislation enacted earlier this year. This testimony will first address the legislation requiring warnings about steroids, and then the revisions to the existing pet shop law.

The bill under consideration today would require posting of information and warnings regarding anabolic steroids and human growth hormone in school locker rooms and other locations which encourage physical fitness such as: racquet ball facilities, platform tennis and health clubs; figure salons; gymnasiums; martial arts and self-defense schools; and any other similar entity offering physical training.

Anabolic steroids have significant adverse consequences. Although they have limited medical use for serious medical conditions such as hormone insufficiencies and cancer, some athletes – both professional and amateur - use these drugs illicitly in an attempt to enhance performance or improve their physical appearance. They increase muscle growth and may reduce recovery time from injury. Their use can lead to a number of adverse health effects. These include increasing risk of heart attack, liver tumors, infertility. In adolescents who are still growing, anabolic steroid use can cause premature cessation of growth, resulting in short stature. Anabolic steroids can also lead to a number of behavioral and psychiatric problems. These range from mood swings, depression and irritability and may become quite severe, including rank aggression, paranoia, and delusional thinking.

Human growth hormone (or HGH) can also be used legally to stimulate cell reproduction and build muscle mass. HGH is a synthetic form of growth hormone that is approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration to treat growth disorders and adult growth hormone deficiency. It also has side effects including joint pain, muscle weakness, diabetes, and hypertension.

The Department acknowledges the health risks associated with these substances. We are concerned, however, about the requirements placed on our agency in this legislation. Specifically, the Department does not enter or regulate many of these facilities which would have to post warning posters, nor do we have the staff and financial resources to enforce and assess penalties for failure to post these signs. We would welcome, however, further

conversation with Council about how to best educate New Yorkers regarding the risks of anabolic steroids and human growth hormone.

The Department is also charged with enforcing the pet shop legislation under consideration today. We want to thank the Council for the opportunity to have worked on and improved on these bills together; the Administration supports both of these pieces of legislation.

The changes being proposed make it easier for pet shops to understand the law, and easier for the City to enforce. The Department appreciates the changes made; in particular, the revised legislation corrects a drafting error that could have, in some cases, suggested a dog or cat should be micro-chipped twice.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.