



Contact: Dave Schemelia
HealthStar Public Relations
609-468-9325
dschemelia@healthstarpr.com

**REALITY COALITION APPLAUDS FDA FOR PUBLIC HEALTH WARNING AGAINST
USE OF 14 HYDROXYCUT DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS**
Group Calls for Congressional Review of DSHEA Laws

NEW YORK, May 4, 2009 – The Reality Coalition – a group of experts and organizations on overweight and obesity – applauds the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) swift action warning consumers about the serious health risks associated with the use of 14 dietary supplements sold under the Hydroxycut brand name.

The FDA’s action aligns with the Reality Coalition’s position that consumers should avoid unregulated dietary weight loss products that promise quick fix weight loss, but lack the scientific rigor to support these claims.

“This action by the FDA today draws even further attention to the serious public health threat posed by unregulated dietary supplements,” said Reality Coalition co-chair George L. Blackburn, MD, Ph.D. “Consumers must be educated and continuously made aware that over-the-counter weight loss supplements are not FDA approved.”

“We have always argued that manufacturers of these products be held accountable to the same scientific standards as pharmaceutical drugs,” said Louis J. Aronne, M.D. “Now, is the ideal time for Congress to protect consumers by taking a closer look at the current Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act, raising the regulatory bar for weight loss supplement manufacturers to be accountable for the safety and efficacy of their products. At this point, the FDA has approved one product for weight loss for over-the-counter sale, but that’s not enough. We firmly believe that there needs to be an FDA review process for all OTC weight loss products, otherwise tragedies like this will continue to occur.”

For more information, visit www.reality-coalition.org.

Dietary Weight Loss Supplements

The use of dietary supplements for weight loss is common among U.S. adults, however; many are long-term users and most do not discuss this practice with their physician. Most of the weight-loss supplements taken contain stimulants.¹

About Overweight and Obesity

Currently, approximately 65 percent of U.S. adults are overweight or obese, according to the National Institutes of Health. Research suggests that overweight individuals appear to be on the pathway to obesity. Overweight and obesity are associated with an increased risk of developing health problems such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Factors that can contribute to overweight include an abundance of high-calorie foods, low levels of physical activity, behavior, environment, and genetics. Multiple studies have shown that a modest reduction in weight improves health outcomes significantly in overweight or obese patients.

About the Reality Coalition

The Reality Coalition is a group of esteemed experts and organizations on obesity, nutrition, diabetes and healthcare policy who share the common goal of advancing an agenda for realistic approaches to weight loss to achieve improved public health.

The Reality Initiative was launched in 2006 and is supported by an educational grant from GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare. The Coalition developed a white paper entitled, "Help Not Hype: Getting Real About Weight Loss" (published in *Obesity Management*, February 2007), which was introduced in partnership with the Federal Trade Commission at NAASO, The Obesity Society annual meeting in October 2006. Committed to changing the national weight loss dialogue and broadening its sponsorship base, the Coalition is expanding its efforts in 2009 to invite business leaders, private, public, professional and non-profit groups to partner in our work.

Reality Coalition co-chairs are Louis J. Aronne, MD, Dr. George L. Blackburn, MD, Ph.D, and MRC Greenwood, Ph.D. Reality Coalition members include: Arthur Frank, MD, Obesity Specialist; Gary Foster, Ph.D, Behavioral Psychologist; Barbara Moore, Ph.D, Nutritionist; Judith Stern, Sc.D, Nutritionist; Anne Wolf, MS, RD, Dietitian; Madelyn Fernstrom, Ph.D, CNS, Nutritionist; Johanna Dwyer, Ph.D, Nutritionist; Susan Cummings, RD, Dietitian; Jeremy Nobel, MD, MPH, Public Health Expert; Valentine Burroughs, MD, MBA, Diabetes Expert; Morgan Downey, JD, Obesity Specialist, Shaping America's Health; The Obesity Society; National Consumers League; America On the Move; American Dietetic Association; and the American Pharmacists Association.

###

ⁱ Blanck, H-M, Serdula, M-K, Gillespie, C, Galuska, D-A, Sharpe, P-A, Conway, JM, Khan, LK; Ainsworth, BE, "Use of nonprescription dietary supplements for weight loss is common among Americans," J-Am-Diet- Assoc. 2007 Mar; 107(3): 441-7