Deputy Sheriff's Association of Michigan

June 9, 2011

The Honorable Gail Haines
Chair, House Health Policy Committee
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Representative Haines:

On behalf of the Deputy Sheriff's Association of Michigan (DSAM), we respectfully submit this letter supporting the position of the Consumer Healthcare Products Association in regard to tracking the sales of products containing Pseudoephedrine. DSAM represents more than 3,200 members, including patrol officers, detectives, local correction officers, evidence technicians, and emergency dispatchers.

Pseudoephedrine (PSE), a safe and effective ingredient found in common cold and allergy medications, is also used today by criminals who seek to illegally produce and abuse methamphetamine. As a result, in certain states, some elected officials are working to mandate a doctor's prescription to obtain these basic medicines containing PSE, even though law-abiding citizens would be punished with additional costs and burdens.

While the intentions of these individuals are good, as we understand and agree that meth abuse is a serious issue requiring both concern and action, we disagree on the solution. There is a common sense and effective electronic blocking system that allows states to monitor purchases in real time of products containing PSE, and also stops sales to those individuals who should not be procuring these items.

The facts on the e-tracking system's performance are clear, as it has blocked 40,000 grams each month of PSE sales in states that have been online long enough to measure its success, including Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky and Louisiana. It also provides law enforcement with critical information that allows them to identify and hold to account those who seek to manufacture or use meth.

E-tracking is a reasonable approach. It stops criminals, while allowing law-abiding citizens to obtain the medicines they need for colds and allergies.

We support the innovative approach taken by Senator John Proos in SB 333 and Representative Amanda Price in HB 4564. These Bills establish a real-time electronic tracking system that blocks illegal sales while allowing continued access for consumers who depend on these medicines.

More than twelve states have adopted e-tracking statutes that require retailers to record sales of PSE in real-time and block sales to consumers who seek to purchase more than the legal limit. By participating in the National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEx) system, the e-tracking database will be integrated with participating states, so that meth cooks can't simply cross state lines to avoid the legal limits. In short, this is a real-time system that blocks thousands of sales to criminals, while allowing law-abiding citizens to get the medicines they need.

These Bills represent smart use of modern technology to solve a serious problem. It's the right solution for our state. This tracking system is provided to retailers, pharmacists and the state at no charge, so we can tackle the problem of meth without further burdening consumers, taxpayers or the state budget.

We oppose legislation that would tackle the meth problem by requiring a doctor's prescription to purchase cold and allergy medicine containing PSE.

- This legislation is a burden to consumers who would have to take time away from work and school, and subject them to fees and/or co-payments for appointments with their doctors every time they or their children need cold or allergy relief from medicines containing PSE.

- It's a burden to the health care system, which would have to make room for literally millions of new and unnecessary doctor visits every year. In Michigan, 87 communities are already classified as medically underserved areas.

- It's a burden to taxpayers and the already-stretched state budget. Legislation to require prescriptions for PSE medications will reduce sales tax collections, while inflating the costs of Medicaid, employee health care costs and retiree health care costs.

We support the Committee's efforts to address the devastating problems associated with meth in a timely manner. We respectfully request your support of SB 333 and HB 4564, and opposition to the legislation requiring a prescription for PSE medications.

Respectfully,

Dan Heythaler
Legislative Committee Chair