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MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Mark B. Cohen, Chair
Democratic Human Services Committee 

DATE: January 20, 2011

RE: Co-sponsorship of Legislation on the Regulation of Abused OTC Drug

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation which would make Dextromethorphan, also known as Poor Man's PCP, subject to the requirements of the Non-controlled Substances Reporting and Registration Act.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, Dextromethorphan (DXM) is an over-the-counter (OTC) cough suppressant that is often abused in high doses "by adolescents to generate euphoria and visual and auditory hallucinations. Illicit use of DXM is referred to on the street as 'Robo-tripping.' The abuse of high doses of DXM in combination with alcohol or other drugs is particularly dangerous and deaths have been reported."

According to the DEA, more so than the abuse of OTC liquid cough preparations, DMX powder in high concentration sold over the internet and illicitly manufactured tablets mixed with other illicit drugs such as ecstasy and methamphetamine have become more prevalent in cases with health complications.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers reports that an estimated 10,410 emergency department visits were associated with non-medical use of DXM in 2008. A six-year retrospective study by the California Poison Control System showed a 15-fold increase from 1999 to 2004 in the rate of DXM abuse cases in adolescents.

This legislation adds DXM to the PA Department of Health's list of regulated substances that are used or could be used in the illegal manufacture of controlled substances. Any manufacturer, wholesaler, retailer or other person engaged in the sale, distribution, transfer or furnishing of substances covered by the Act must register with the PA Department of Health.

If you would like to co-sponsor this important legislation, please contact Linda Huntington in my office at 787-3085 or lhunting@pahouse.net.