

**STATEMENT OF FRANK D. URYASZ, PRESIDENT,  
THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR DRUG FREE SPORT, INC.  
AND A REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**  
BEFORE THE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
OCTOBER 8, 2002  
EPHEDRA: WHO IS PROTECTING AMERICAN CONSUMERS?

Chairman Durbin and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, thank you for inviting the NCAA to appear today to inform you of the Association's activities as they pertain to the substance "ephedra."

I am Frank D. Uryasz, president of The National Center for Drug Free Sport, Inc. The Center is a for-profit corporation based in Kansas City, Missouri. Our company provides drug-education and drug-testing services to sports organizations, colleges, universities and high schools. Our clients include the NCAA, NFL and many colleges and universities.

Prior to starting The Center, I was director of sports sciences for The National Collegiate Athletic Association from 1986 through 1999. As director of sports sciences, I was responsible for managing the NCAA health and safety programs, which included the national drug-testing programs.

Currently, Drug Free Sport administers the NCAA's national drug-testing programs. For this reason, the NCAA asked me to represent it here today. Also present with me today are Mary Wilfert and Abe Frank from the NCAA national and Washington offices.

The NCAA is a private association of approximately 1,200 four-year colleges, universities and athletics conferences. Approximately 360,000 student-athletes compete in intercollegiate athletics at these institutions.

One of the guiding principles of the NCAA is in the area of athlete health and welfare. The NCAA manual states that it is the responsibility of each member institution to protect the health and safety and provide a safe environment for each of its participating student-athletes.

The NCAA schools take this responsibility seriously and the NCAA commits significant resources to its schools to ensure that athletes' health and safety are maximized. These resources include:

- The NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports. This committee is a full standing committee of the Association. Its sole purpose is to advise the NCAA and its members on matters regarding health and safety.
- The NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook. A set of sports medicine guidelines for member schools that includes the NCAA's recommendations on educating athletes about dietary supplements.
- Health and safety specialists. The NCAA national office employs staff members who oversee the NCAA's health and safety initiatives.
- Two national drug-testing programs designed to deter the use of NCAA banned drugs.
- Educational seminars on developing student-athlete drug and supplement prevention programs within the university.
- National survey research on the drug and supplement use and abuse habits of college athletes.

These are a just a few of the many ways that the NCAA commits its resources to helping student-athletes maintain or enhance their health.

Since 1985, the NCAA has conducted a national study of the drug and supplement use habits of college athletes. The study is replicated every four years and four replications have been conducted since the original study. The study is designed to obtain data on the substances and use patterns of college athletes through the use of anonymous self-report questionnaires. Over 21,000 student-athletes completed the survey in the 2001 study. Copies of the study are available at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) and are available at the hearing today.

Prior to the 1997 replication, the NCAA competitive safeguards committee had been monitoring reports of the growing use of dietary supplements, including ephedrine, by college athletes. Accordingly, the committee included questions about the use of supplements on the 1997 survey. The 1997 study found the following regarding college athletes' use of ephedrine:

- 3.5% of the athletes surveyed reported using ephedrine within the previous 12 months.
- The highest rate of ephedrine use among male athletes was in wrestling (10.4%); the highest for women was in soccer (3.3%).
- 50.8% of users said they used ephedrine primarily to improve athletic performance.
- Athletes used ephedrine more in the competitive season, started their use in high school and many used right before or during practice or competition.

Although the study showed that a small percentage of athletes was using ephedrine, the NCAA was concerned that its use was being linked so closely with the desire to improve athletic performance. For this reason, the competitive safeguards committee recommended in July 1997 that ephedrine be included on the list of banned drugs by the NCAA. The NCAA membership agreed with this recommendation and ephedrine remains on the list to this day.

The NCAA sponsors two national drug-testing programs for college athletes. As part of its drug-prevention efforts, the NCAA publishes a list of banned drug classes and tests athletes periodically. The NCAA list, like most banned-drug lists of national and international sports organizations, includes stimulants. Ephedrine is included on that list.

The NCAA drug-testing programs are designed to deter the use of banned drugs. The NCAA believes testing is necessary to protect the athletes' health and safety and to ensure that athletes are not using performance-enhancing drugs to gain a competitive advantage.

The NCAA instituted drug testing at its championships and post-season football bowl games in 1986. Since 1986, any NCAA athlete competing in these events is subject to NCAA drug testing under a strict, published protocol utilizing the best laboratory in the U.S. for sports drug testing. Approximately 1,500 athletes are tested each year. Athletes who test positive lose their eligibility to compete in all sports for at least one year. Since the 1997 ban on ephedrine, all athletes who participate in NCAA drug testing have been tested for ephedrine use.

To deter the use of training drugs such as anabolic steroids, the NCAA implemented a second drug-testing program in August 1990. Today as part of this program, over 10,000 athletes are tested by the NCAA on their campuses August through June. Stimulant testing was not included in this testing program.

The 2001 replication of the NCAA's national drug use survey provided new data on how athletes' use of ephedrine changed from the 1997 survey.

- Ephedrine use had grown from 3.5% in 1997 to 3.9% in 2001.
- The highest use in men's sports was now in lacrosse (5.5%) and in women's gymnastics (8.3%).
- Most started using ephedrine in high school.
- Users stated that they used ephedrine to improve performance (24%), as an appetite suppressant (22%), for health reasons (22%) and to improve appearance (20%).

Due in large part to the 2001 survey findings, the NCAA added ephedrine testing to its year-round drug-testing program in August 2002. This year, NCAA will conduct over 10,000 drug tests for ephedrine.

It should be noted that the NCAA ban on ephedra is part of an overall ban on the use of stimulants. Athletes will use stimulants to increase their energy levels and to help them lose weight or body fat. The use of stimulants combined with exercise and heat can cause damaging health effects and even sudden death.

The NCAA's prevention efforts as they pertain to ephedra(ine) are significant. They include:

- The Dietary Supplement Resource Exchange Center (REC). All NCAA athletes may use this service funded by the NCAA and housed at Drug Free Sport. The REC provides a toll-free number and Web site for athletes to get reliable information about the effects of supplement use. Inquiries are treated in a confidential manner. The REC has an ongoing relationship whereby any reports of health effects of supplement use are reported to the FDA's Medwatch program.
- Educational information via bookmarks and on the Web at [www.drugfreesport.com](http://www.drugfreesport.com).
- Posters explaining the consequences of supplement use.
- Educational conferences for coaches and administrators on deterring supplement use by athletes.
- A national speakers bureau of experts on drug and supplement use in sport.
- The NCAA also communicates through its biweekly publication, The NCAA News, which has featured a number of articles on supplement use. A special advisory memorandum from the NCAA also was sent June 5, 2001, copies of which are available today at the hearing.

All NCAA colleges have agreed through formal legislation not to distribute supplements to athletes unless the products fall into specific, restricted categories such as fluid replacement drinks or vitamins and minerals. Ephedra is not provided under any circumstances.

Ephedra(ine) can be found in a multitude of sports supplements that are marketed to NCAA athletes. Everything from "energy bars," to "power drinks" to supplement pills and capsules, all of which are legally obtainable, contain ephedra, ephedrine or ma huang. Product manufacturers target young, active people with ads that tout the performance enhancing benefits of cutting fat and increasing energy. Such ads refer to ephedrine as a "natural way" to achieve superior performance. It is fair to say that those of us who educate young people on the dangers of supplement use feel like the proverbial lone voice in the wilderness of supplement marketing.

The NCAA remains committed to reducing the demand-side of the dietary supplement problem in sport. Its testing, education and prevention programs are based on national research, administered at the highest level and with the greatest oversight possible. The NCAA wishes to make known today that it is a willing partner in any national effort that will enhance the health and safety of its athletes.

Thank you.

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