

Senate OKs Bill Limiting Pseudoephedrine Access

BY KATIE STEVENSON

The Senate has again sent a bill to the House that would require retailers selling pseudoephedrine-containing over-the-counter products to train employees to comply with the Combat Methamphetamine Act.

The Combat Methamphetamine Enhancement Act, S. 256, introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), passed the Senate in early June.

Products containing the ingredient include antihistamine and decongestant products such as Claritin-D, Sudafed, and Zyrtec-D.

The bill, which the Senate also passed

in 2008 and which Sen. Feinstein initially introduced in 2007, would impose restrictions on retailers that fail to meet requirements of the Combat Methamphetamine Act enacted in 2006.

It would require that distributors deliver PSE- and ephedrine-containing over-the-counter drugs only to retailers that are self-certified through the Drug Enforcement Administration to sell the products.

The 2006 law requires retail employees who sell products containing PSE or ephedrine to receive training outlined on the DEA's Web site.

As in 2008, the fate of Sen. Feinstein's bill rests with the House, where it was re-

ferred to the Energy and Commerce Committee with no hearing date set. A version of the bill introduced by Rep.

The fate of the Combat Methamphetamine Enhancement Act rests with the House, but companion legislation has yet to be introduced in that body this year.

Rick Boucher (D-Va.) stalled last year, but a companion bill has yet to be introduced in the House this year.

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores supports S. 256, although it "would potentially limit consumer access to these important health care prod-

ucts," NACDS President Steve Anderson said in a March letter to Sen. Feinstein.

The Consumer Healthcare Products Association also supports the legislation, but is lobbying against a California bill that would make PSE products prescription-only in the state. CHPA warned that the California measure would not only restrict consumers' access to ephedrine and PSE products, but also increase health insurance premiums for state employees and cost the state \$4.5 million in sales tax revenue. ■

Katie Stevenson is a reporter for The Tan Sheet. This newspaper and The Tan Sheet are published by Elsevier.

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