



Office of the Director
Bureau of Consumer Protection

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

Television Station

Re: Miracle Cure and Weight Loss Advertisements on Your Stations

Dear Station Owner:

In April 2004, the Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) announced its Hispanic Outreach and Law Enforcement Initiative with the goals of detecting, stopping, and preventing consumer fraud against Hispanics. To achieve these goals, we continue to actively monitor Spanish-language media and aggressively bring law enforcement actions against marketers defrauding consumers. We have also conducted ad screening training for radio and television station managers to provide guidance on how to spot facially problematic ads, such as ads for weight loss products containing false “red flag” weight loss claims and dietary supplements promising miracle cures. In addition, in December 2003, the FTC announced an education campaign to help media outlets screen out ads for weight-loss products that contain false claims. To support this initiative, the FTC released a handy reference guide entitled *Red Flag Bogus Weight Loss Claims*.

We wanted to make you aware that on July 26, 2005, the FTC announced an enforcement action against the marketers of two herbal supplements that advertised their products on television stations, including your stations. The FTC charged that Latinos Group Promotions and its president, Jose Carpinteyro, made false and unsubstantiated claims about two herbal supplements, Arcomig and Essiac Formula, in television advertisements. These advertisements included claims that Arcomig treats or cures serious diseases, including cancer, leukemia, diabetes, arthritis, and asthma. The advertisements also claimed that another product, Essiac Formula, could treat or cure serious diseases, including cancer and heavy metal poisoning and that Essiac Formula causes rapid and substantial weight loss without the need to increase exercise or reduce caloric intake.

In addition, on October 6, 2004, May 17, 2005, and October 25, 2005, the FTC announced three separate enforcement actions against marketers of weight loss products that advertised their products on television stations, including on your stations.

In the first action, on October 6, 2004, the FTC charged that American Dream Enterprises, LLC, and its owner, Andres Fernandez Salvador, made false and unsubstantiated claims in marketing Fat Seltzer, a purported weight loss patch, in television advertisements that aired on stations including your stations. These advertisements included claims that Fat Seltzer causes substantial and permanent weight loss without the need to diet.

In the second action, on May 17, 2005, the FTC charged that Direct Prom, Inc. and its president, Ramiro Mailland, made false and unsubstantiated claims about its weight loss product, “ReduCarb,” in radio and television advertisements that aired on stations including your station. These advertisements claimed that ReduCarb causes substantial weight loss in a short time and without any change in diet.

In the third action, on October 25, 2005, the FTC charged that La Grana and its principals made false and unsubstantiated claims in marketing its weight loss products in television advertisements that aired on stations including on your stations. The advertisements for Svelt Body Complete and Imagen Enlinea claimed that these products would cause substantial weight loss

without diet or exercise.

We have enclosed copies of the FTC's complaints against the companies and the stipulated judgments, which require, among other things, that the companies have reliable scientific proof to substantiate any claims they make in the future. The stipulated final judgments are for settlement purposes only and do not constitute an admission by the defendants of a law violation. We also enclose copies of the press releases announcing these and other law enforcement actions targeting deceptive marketing for a range of products and services, including advance fee credit cards, work-at-home business opportunities, and weight loss supplements.

We know that no television station wants to knowingly air false miracle cure or weight loss claims or mislead its audience. We hope this notification and the enclosed materials will help your staff identify and reject miracle cure and weight loss ads that contain facially false claims in the future. Information for spotting false miracle cure claims is available at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/health/frdheal.htm>. (In Spanish, at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/spanish/health/s-frdheal.htm>.) Information for identifying false weight loss claims is available at <http://www.ftc.gov/redflag/>. (In Spanish, at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/spanish/buspubs/s-redflag.htm>.)

Please do not hesitate to contact Laura Koss at 202-326-2890 if you have any questions. Thank you for your time and attention in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Lydia B. Parnes
Director

Enclosures