



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Food and Drug Administration  
Rockville, MD 20857

June 15, 1999

**TO ALL HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

The Food and Drug Administration is concerned about the use and misuse of consumer products, some of which are labeled dietary supplements, and other products containing gamma hydroxybutyric acid (GHB), gamma butyrolactone (GBL) and 1,4 butanediol (BD). It is illegal to manufacture and distribute GHB, GBL, or BD-containing products for human consumption. More than 122 serious illnesses and three deaths have been reported, as a result of using products that contain these ingredients. As the use of these products have increased during the past few years, complications associated with their use have increased. In 1990, FDA banned the use of GHB but some companies switched ingredients to GBL, and after warnings about GBL, some switched to BD. These are all very similar chemicals which the body converts to GHB—with the same dangerous effects.

To warn consumers about the dangers surrounding these products, FDA has issued the attached flyers. These flyers outline the dangers of using products in the GHB family. **Please disseminate the flyers in prominent places throughout your organization. In addition, we are asking that you publish the attached information in your publications, magazines or association/company newsletters.**

I hope you will support FDA's efforts to bring this critical information to consumers about the dangers associated with products containing these chemicals. If you would like additional information about any of these products, please contact the Drug Information Branch at 1-888-INFO-FDA. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Janet Woodcock, M.D.  
Director  
Center for Drug Evaluation and Research  
Food and Drug Administration