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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **MHSAA Works With Meijer, Michigan State Police & Department Of Education On Promoting Dangers Of Substance Abuse**

EAST LANSING, Mich. – June 21 – The Michigan High School Athletic Association has teamed with the Meijer stores of Michigan, the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan State Police to provide schools and their coaches with a poster emphasizing the dangers of taking cold, cough and blood pressure medications in excessive doses for incorrect purposes.

Every MHSAA member school has received the four-color 11x17 poster, distributed by the MHSAA, designed by the Michigan State Police and funded by Meijer.

“We have gotten involved,” said MHSAA Executive Director John E. “Jack” Roberts, “because our colleague at the Department of Education, Don Weatherspoon, asked, because we have a good distribution system for information to schools, and because there is evidence that some student-athletes have been misled to believe that this medication can aid athletic performance.”

The MHSAA does not promulgate rules that prohibit the use of any substance by student-athletes. Policies regarding tobacco, alcohol, prescription and over-the-counter medications, steroids and other controlled substances, creatine and nutritional supplements, are a matter of local school board determination.

Roberts does not see MHSAA rule changes in the near future.

“We receive an isolated request or two every few years to standardize rules so that school districts everywhere will treat eligibility issues the same after a student has been found to have used a certain substance. However, there is a lack of agreement on what substances should be banned – groups like the International Olympic Committee, the NCAA and various professional sports leagues can’t agree and can’t keep up with new drugs and supplements developing every week. There’s also lack of agreement among school districts regarding penalties – there’s wide divergence of opinion. And there’s the fundamental issue that this is the job of elected school boards, not a private organization like the MHSAA.”

However, Roberts does not believe the MHSAA should have no role and no opinions.

(more)

## **2-2-2 – MHSAA Works To Promote Dangers Of Substance Abuse**

“We need to be involved in education of athletic administrators, coaches, athletes and their parents, for at least two very compelling reasons.

“First, there’s the matter of student-athletes’ health. People involved must be aware of health risks of most of these drugs and supplements.

“Second, there’s the issue of fairness. As one of the guardians of a fair and equitable playing field in educational athletics, the MHSAA must not equivocate on the message that use of performance-enhancing drugs is cheating.”

At the MHSAA Representative Council’s May 5-7, 2002 meetings, the Council conceded that it was impossible to keep a list of banned drugs current but that it was possible to point out the dangers of drug abuse. The Council voted that the MHSAA include educational components in various MHSAA in-service programs and mailings and to encourage schools to adopt policies locally.

The MHSAA was a major contributor to the preparation of two statements that have been distributed by the National Federation of State High School Associations, one addressing anabolic steroid use, the other on food supplements. (Those statements accompany this release.)

Michigan Public Law 187 prohibits the promotion/distribution of performance-enhancing supplements by Michigan public school employees and volunteers. The law covers androstenedione, creatine and any compound labeled as performance enhancing.

The MHSAA publishes a model policy that it recommends school districts adopt so that the discipline applied by one school district to an athlete, including penalties for drug use, follow the student to another school district should he/she transfer. (The model policy also accompanies this release.)

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,300 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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## **National Federation Statement On Anabolic Steroid Use**

**(Originally released in 1999 – Appears annually in MHSAA Handbook)**

Anabolic steroid use at the high school level is of concern. Steroids are used by some athletes in sports to improve athletic performance and/or to enhance the body in a cosmetic way.

A recent study indicates that more than six percent of high school seniors use steroids. About two-thirds of these seniors tried steroids before the age of 16. The use by high school and junior high school age youth may be on the increase.

High school coaches may not be able to prevent the use of steroids altogether, but they can clearly and forcefully discourage their use. Coaches should take a proactive role in prevention.

First, coaches should learn about steroids, what they do and what they will not do. Then they should provide this information for their athletes. Steroids, with proper diet and weight training, can increase muscle development, however, as is typical with most get-rich-quick schemes, steroid use has potentially serious short-and long-term consequences that must be addressed.

Most coaches would never promote steroid use intentionally. Total silence by coaches, however, condones use in some young people's minds. Even though steroids may not be mentioned when it is suggested to an athlete that his/her success is limited only by a lack of weight and/or strength, without a disclaimer that statement can be a motivation to use steroids. The alluring nature of the drug that allows for development of increased weight under the aforementioned circumstances is a coercive power that is difficult for the individual to resist without knowing what the side effects of the drugs may be.

While steroid use is not rivaling the use of alcohol and other drugs in schools, it is a concern. The issue goes beyond protection of the health of students: the use of steroids in sports is cheating. We stand opposed to the use of steroids by athletes and all members of the student body because of both health and ethical concerns.

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## **National Federation Statement On Food Supplements**

**(Originally released in 1999 – Appears annually in MHSAA Handbook)**

School personnel and coaches should not dispense any drug, medication or food supplement except with extreme caution and in accordance with policies developed in consultation with parents, health-care professionals and senior administrative personnel of the school or school district.

Use of any drug, medication or food supplement in a way not prescribed by the manufacturer should not be authorized or encouraged by school personnel and coaches. Even natural substances in unnatural amounts may have short-term or long-term negative health effects.

In order to minimize health risks to student-athletes, maintain ethical standards and reduce liability risks, school personnel and coaches should never supply, recommend or permit the use of any drug, medication or food supplement solely for performance-enhancing purposes.

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## **Model Policy For Transfers Following Violations Of A School's Student/Athletic Code**

(Adopted by MHSAA Representative Council in 1998 – Appears annually in MHSAA Handbook)

\_\_\_\_\_ High School will enforce upon a transfer student any period of ineligibility to which that student would have been subject as a result of a student or athletic code violation(s) at that student's most recent previously attended school.

A student who transfers to \_\_\_\_\_ High School after becoming ineligible because of a student or athletic conduct code violation(s) at the previously attended school shall remain ineligible at \_\_\_\_\_ High School for not less than the period of ineligibility imposed by the previously attended school. This would be the case even if the student's situation would otherwise satisfy one or more of the exceptions to the transfer regulation of \_\_\_\_\_ High School and the Michigan High School Athletic Association (Regulation I, Section 9), and even if the act which caused the student's ineligibility at the previous school would not be a violation or cause the same period of ineligibility at \_\_\_\_\_ High School.

That student was subject to the rules and penalties of the previous school and shall not be allowed to escape the consequences of his/her conduct and, in doing so, displace students of \_\_\_\_\_ High School from teams, positions, events and awards at least until the full period of ineligibility has been served.

***Note:** The name of the school adopting this policy would be inserted on each blank line above.*

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