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Overwhelming Support for Regulation of Compound Weight Loss Drugs

Survey results¹

To: Partnership for Safe Medicines

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A recent survey of 1,000 likely voters shows overwhelming support for regulation of compounded weight loss injectable drugs sold through weight loss clinics, health spas, compounding pharmacies and social media. While people are not very familiar with compounding pharmacies and compounded medicine, they have significant concerns about injectable weight loss drugs from these entities. They are particularly worried they will not be safe and want a crackdown on weight loss injectable drugs that are not approved by the FDA.

Key Findings:

Most Americans are not familiar with compounded pharmacies and compounded medicines.

- Only 10 percent are very familiar with compounding pharmacies and 8 percent with compounded medicines. Less than a third (28 percent) have either taken a compounded medicine themselves or know a friend or family member who has.

Despite being relatively unfamiliar with compounding medicine, most have concerns about injectable weight loss drugs from entities that are not regulated by the FDA.

- Fully three quarters (76 percent) have a lot or some concerns about injectable weight loss drugs produced by weight loss clinics, health spas, and compounding pharmacies and sold

¹ The following memo is based on a survey of 1,000 likely voters conducted September 13-17, 2024. Respondents were selected from online opt-in panels and matched to the voter file. Because the sample is based in part on those who initially self-selected for participation in the panel rather than a probability sample, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to multiple sources of error, including, but not limited to, sampling error, coverage error, and measurement error.

If this poll were conducted among a probability sample, then the margin of error would be +/- 3.3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval; the margin of error is higher among subgroups. The data are statistically weighted to Census parameters for region, age, education, and gender composition.

- through social media. This includes 79 percent among people who have taken compounding medicines.
- Three quarters would feel very or somewhat unsafe taking compounded weight loss drugs, while only 5 percent would feel very safe taking these drugs.

Americans are most concerned about potential contamination of weight loss drugs, taking potentially counterfeit weight loss drugs and not knowing the country producing these drugs.

- People are most concerned (94 percent) that compounded weight loss drugs could contain bacteria, impurities and different ingredients than listed on the labels.
- They also worry that the drugs could be counterfeit (93 percent), from unknown origin and are not subject to FDA inspections for safety, effectiveness and quality.
- In an open-ended question, the biggest concern people have is lack of regulation and oversight.
- It is important to note that half of online pharmacies are selling injectable weight loss drugs illegally.

Strong support and expectation of FDA regulation of compounding weight loss drugs.

- Americans overwhelming trust the FDA to make sure medicine is safe (81 percent a great deal or a fair amount).
- Eighty-five percent of people expect that the FDA is ensuring that all injectable drugs are safe, and 90 percent believe the FDA should use its existing authority to make sure compounded weight loss drugs are safe.
- Almost 90 percent say that Congress should take action to make sure the FDA regulates the production, marketing and sale of compounded weight loss drugs.
- Support for FDA oversight and regulation has strong bipartisan backing. Even before hearing information about the dangers of unregulated compounded weight loss drugs, 94 percent of Democrats, 88 percent of Independents and 88 percent of Republicans say that the FDA should make sure these medicines are safe. The numbers are similar for Congressional action to ensure FDA regulation.

The use of injectable weight loss drugs is widespread, but after hearing information about lack of regulation, few would take a compounded version.

- Over half of Americans (52 percent) have either used these drugs themselves or know someone who has.
- After hearing about potential contamination and instances of people falling ill or dying after taking compounded medicines, 90 percent say it is not worth the risk to take compounded weight loss drugs.