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PHARMA & HEALTHCARE (/HEALTHCARE) 6/14/2013 @ 10:46AM | 5,532 views

AMA May Endorse Ban Of High-Energy Drinks

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The American Medical Association may throw its clout behind sales and advertising bans of “high-energy/stimulant drinks” to young people under age 18, pending more scientific study about health risks.

A debate schedule for this weekend by the AMA’s policy-making House of Delegates comes amid intensifying scrutiny of energy drinks, which are popular particularly among young adults who get a boost from caffeine and other ingredients in the beverages.

But a resolution from the New York State Medical Society that will be discussed at this year’s annual AMA meeting in Chicago cites an increase in emergency room visits the physicians said was “linked to the consumption of ‘stimulant’ drinks.”

Doctors have also cited probes like that of the New York State Attorney General’s investigation into drink makers that include [Monster Beverage](/companies/monster-beverage/)

[MNST](/companies/monster-beverage/) -0.28% (</companies/monster-beverage/>) Corp. (MNST) and [PepsiCo](/companies/pepsico/)

[PEP](/companies/pepsico/) -0.65% (</companies/pepsico/>) Inc. (PEP).

Though any action this weekend by the AMA’s policy-making House of Delegates has no legal authority over the sale of high-energy drinks, the national doctor’s group has a bully pulpit on public health issues. The AMA is also considered a powerful lobby in [Washington](#)

http://www.daylife.com/image/0cjO3Q1058gYR?utm_source=zemanta&utm_medium=p&utm_content=0cjO3Q1058gYR&utm_ca



[\(http://www.forbes.com/washington/\)](http://www.forbes.com/washington/) and in state capitols across the county where it holds sway when it comes to medical policy and health regulations.

“The popularity of stimulant drinks has increased markedly in recent years with sales increasing 240 percent from 2004-2009, with further data indicating that these drinks are consumed by 30 to 50 percent of children, adolescents, and young adults,” the New York delegation to the AMA House of delegates said in its resolution. “Studies have shown that high ‘stimulant’ drinks contain excessive amounts of caffeine with one can having the equivalent of up to 50 cups of coffee. Excessive caffeine can cause adverse effects such as dizziness, insomnia, agitation, restlessness, anxiety, GI disturbances, myocardial infarction and death.”

Any push by the AMA could meet resistance from drink makers.

Monster, for example, [earlier this year has fought back](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323798104578455461815547402.html) [against](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323798104578455461815547402.html) curbs on sales of its drinks such as a suit it filed against the San Francisco City Attorney this spring. Monster has also said labeling on its drinks caution that the beverages are “not recommended for children, pregnant women or people sensitive to caffeine,” [according to an April report in the](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323798104578455461815547402.html) [Wall Street](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323798104578455461815547402.html) [\(http://www.forbes.com/wall-street/\)](http://www.forbes.com/wall-street/) Journal linked here.

The resolution regarding energy drinks is among dozens that will be debated at the AMA’s 524-member House of Delegates, which convenes Saturday to Wednesday at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

Aside from endorsing a ban on such drinks, AMA delegates are also pushing for more scientific study of energy drinks.

On June 18, the AMA’s policy-making House of Delegates adopted policy supporting a ban on the marketing, but not on the sale of “high stimulant/caffeine drinks to adolescents under the age of 18. [Here’s a link to AMA statement on the new policy.](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/news/news/2013/2013-06-18-new-ama-policies-annual-meeting.page) [\(<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/news/news/2013/2013-06-18-new-ama-policies-annual-meeting.page>\)](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/news/news/2013/2013-06-18-new-ama-policies-annual-meeting.page)

Said AMA board member Dr. Alexander Ding, “Energy drinks contain massive and excessive amounts of caffeine that may lead to a host of health problems in young people, including heart problems, and banning companies from marketing these products to adolescents is a common sense action that we can take to protect the health of American kids.”

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