

EDUCATION ON HEALTH HAZARDS IN USE OF ANABOLIC STEROIDS

*Adopted by Convention Delegates May 6, 1989
Reviewed and deemed relevant November 2017*

- WHEREAS,** The PTA has a long-standing concern regarding the health, welfare and safety of children and youth; and
- WHEREAS,** According to a nationwide study published by the Journal of the American Medical Association, anabolic steroids have become drugs of abuse among teenagers; and
- WHEREAS,** Anabolic steroids are being used over extended periods of time, beginning at a young age, and, in the study, more than a quarter of the users said they took the drugs not for improved athletic performance but to improve their physical appearance; and
- WHEREAS,** Medical experts are in agreement that the illegal use of anabolic steroids can have severe serious side effects on the health of adolescents leading to possibilities of liver damage, risks for cardiovascular disease, shutting off bone growth, behavioral changes, possible damage to reproductive organs, and possibly stunted growth in children; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts encourage school districts to include in school health education programs information on the dangers of using anabolic steroids; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to work with appropriate agencies to implement education awareness programs for parents, students and communities to alert them to the health hazards of using anabolic steroids; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA submit this resolution to the National PTA for consideration at the 1989 National PTA Convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

As many as half a million American high school seniors have used anabolic steroids – many of them in large doses, over extended periods of time and beginning at a young age, according to the first nationwide survey of steroid use among teenage boys. The study, published by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), also states that most of the users in the survey said they took the black market drugs in hopes of improving their athletic performance. But a surprising 26.7% of the users said their motivation was to improve their appearance. The study found that 6.6% of the 12th grade male students surveyed said they were using or had used anabolic steroids. More than a third of those had first used the drugs at age 15 or younger.

The JAMA study suggests that steroids have become drugs of abuse among teenagers, and this development is troubling because the side effects may be especially serious in adolescents. The study states, “The evidence indicates that **educational** intervention strategies should begin as early as junior high school and that the education should not be directed only toward those individuals who participate in school-based athletics.”

Forest S. Tennant, Jr., M.D., a national authority on drug abuse, who is drug advisor to the National Football League and drug consultant to the Los Angeles Dodgers, said that steroids have become the latest drug epidemic among the country’s athletic youth. Medical experts state some of the risks as cancer, liver damage, and an increase in risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Experts in this field say steroids should now be included in drug education programs targeted to high school **and** junior high school students.

The California State PTA has already supported state legislation to educate school personnel, students and parents about the dangers of anabolic steroids, and is most concerned about the need for parent education on this subject. PTA, with its long history of advocacy for good health for children, youth and families, must continue to work in this direction.