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# CRN: The Short Report

A topline report from the Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), the leading trade association for the dietary supplement and functional food industry

## Inaugural CRN Retailer Relations Forum event at NACDS expo highlights CVS's third-party testing and IRI data on the omni-channel shopper

"A strong relationship between a dietary supplement company and a retailer is a core part of the foundation for establishing—and maintaining—trust in our products," said Olly Vice President of Sales Tom Mondragon, who serves as chair of CRN's newly formed [Retailer Relations Forum](#), addressing the group at its first in-person event. Held at the [NACDS Total Store Expo](#) in Boston, the event featured CVS Vice President of Consumer Health and Wellness Brian Eason who spoke to the group about CVS's goals for the supplement aisle and expectations of the vendor community. Mr. Eason reported that over 1,600 products from more than 150 suppliers have now gone through CVS's new [Tested to be Trusted](#) program for supplements. Seven percent of those products did not pass the initial testing and have since been reformulated, relabeled or removed from shelves. The Forum also learned about CVS's vision for expanding its [HealthHUBs](#), which have the potential to include a wellness approach to healthcare that could incentivize self-care opportunities throughout the store, including dietary supplements.

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## CRN urges FDA to clear up confusion over probiotic labeling

Consumer demand for probiotics is high, but confusion over product labeling could threaten continued growth in the category unless FDA takes action. Probiotic labeling should prioritize the information consumers need to know when selecting products—in this case, the number of live microorganisms, measured in colony forming units (CFUs), *not* how much these microorganisms weigh. But general FDA regulations governing supplements require all ingredients to be disclosed by weight. CRN has urged FDA to address this discrepancy by revising its draft guidance on probiotics, or at least announcing a formal policy of enforcement discretion for labeling with CFUs. "Declaration of dietary ingredients on a Supplement Facts label should provide the most meaningful information to consumers, and in the case of probiotics, live microorganisms are the beneficial and relevant portion of the ingredient," CRN stated in its Aug. 15 [letter](#). *Continued on back...*



## CRN presses FDA and Congress: 'Create a legal pathway for CBD in supplements'

Following up on the FDA public meeting on CBD and hemp held on [May 31](#), CRN has continued to urge FDA to use its statutory authority to permit hemp-derived CBD-containing products to be marketed in dietary supplements. At the same time, CRN has met with numerous Congressional offices throughout the summer to ask that Congress keep the pressure on FDA to use that discretion. While the agency continues to delay a decision, the uncertain legal status of CBD drives uncertainty in the marketplace, and prevents some large retailers from introducing ingestible CBD products in their stores while allowing less scrupulous manufacturers to gain market share and shelf space in others.

CRN has emphasized the need for FDA to act promptly to protect consumers and establish a lawful, level playing field for responsible CBD companies to market safe products. CRN continues to call on FDA to require companies that market CBD as a dietary supplement to all the requirements that other supplements must observe (e.g., facility registration, adverse event reporting systems, compliance with GMPs, etc.).



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In addition to Mr. Eason's presentation, CRN's Steve Mister highlighted the association's [Label Wise](#) consumer education campaign, emphasizing opportunities for retailers to leverage the program with their own customers to promote the coming changes to the supplement label. Lisa Buono, of big data and predictive analytics provider, [IRI](#), offered insights into the growth of the consumer self-care sector, focusing on the nutritionals category as a growth driver, and demonstrating how omni-channel opportunities are changing consumer purchasing behavior.

CRN and its member companies share a commitment to collaborating with retailers; generating new and growing existing business; and helping consumers safely and smartly achieve optimal health and wellness through the use of dietary supplement and functional food products. Plans are underway for a Retailer Relations Forum "engagement event" with another retailer later this Fall. For more information on CRN's Retailer Relations Forum, contact [Tom Mondragon](#).



### CRN's Mister to present at annual 'Selfcare Summit,' offer insights on industry, retailer collaboration in the supplement aisle

Dietary supplement industry growth and increasing consumer interest in self-care present retailers with opportunities to optimize their supplement aisles. On Oct. 6, at the [Global Market Development Center's \(GMDC\) Selfcare Summit](#) in Indianapolis, CRN's Steve Mister will share new results from the association's 2019 consumer survey and offer advice on partnering with supplement vendors to provide customers more information about how these products promote health and wellness. Mr. Mister's presentation is part of the educational track on "Selfcare Consumer & The Retail Selfcare Roadmap," which will also give retailers suggestions for lowering liability on these products while positioning their store as the community healthcare center for wellness. Learn more about the GMDC Selfcare Summit [here](#).



**SARMS: A RISK FOR CONSUMERS**  
Selective Androgen Receptor Modulators (SARMS) are potentially dangerous and are illegal in performance-enhancing products. Sometimes listed with names like "ostarine" and "andarine," or not at all. SARMS are unapproved drugs, not dietary supplements and should be avoided.

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*Continued from front..."CRN urges FDA to clear up confusion over probiotic labeling"*

CRN has been calling on FDA [since 2014](#) to permit the declaration of ingredient quantity for probiotic dietary supplements by identifying the amount of live microbial organisms on supplement labels in lieu of general requirements that ingredient quantity be declared by metric weight. CRN has explained that weight is not an appropriate unit of measure for live microbial ingredients, as it represents the total cellular mass of both live and dead microorganisms. FDA's current policy which permits CFUs but still requires metric weight to be listed on labels creates confusion; it disregards CFUs as the [industry best practice](#) for quantification and allows less scrupulous manufacturers to ignore expectations that probiotics survive through shelf life.

### CRN raises retailer awareness of adulteration issues, legal considerations for CBD via Shopping for Health event

When it comes to protecting consumers from adulterated products sold as dietary supplements, FDA, industry and retailers all have a role to play, CRN's Nancy Weindruch told attendees at this year's [Shopping for Health](#) conference in St. Louis, Missouri. For the third year in a row, CRN sponsored and attended the invitation-only event held for registered dietitians, nutritionists and consumer advisors at supermarket and retail chains, including Albertson's, Giant, Kroger and Wegmans. Ms. Weindruch, joined by CRN's Holly Vogtman, facilitated the session, "Too Good to Be True," discussing the dangers of adulterated products in the marketplace and how FDA regulation along with responsible companies' adherence to industry best practices and participation in self-regulatory initiatives can mitigate those dangers.

Additionally, as part of its sponsorship, CRN will host a webinar for the entire Shopping for Health network on Oct. 3. The webinar, "Navigating the CBD and Hemp Market: What Supermarket RDs Need to Know," will feature CRN's Megan Olsen and CV Sciences' Duffy MacKay, N.D. The webinar will address the current regulatory status of CBD, the current state of CBD science, efforts under way to clarify a legal pathway for hemp-derived CBD in dietary supplements, and what retailers need to know if looking to stock their shelves with quality CBD products.

#### Like what you see? Have questions?

E-mail Emily Zavrel ([ezavrel@crnusa.org](mailto:ezavrel@crnusa.org)) to be added to CRN's list to receive press releases and other news, or to ask a question about something you've read here.