

## **Cracking down on industry cheaters**

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They come with exaggerated claims. “200% double your money-back guarantee!” “Pass any drug test or hair follicle test GUARANTEED.” “We are positive you will test negative!!”

Most sell diuretics with names like Eliminator Carbo Shake, Naturally Clean Herbal Tea and Randomizer.

Some sell external devices like the \$49.95 Whizzinator, “designed to be comfortably worn as an undergarment for extended periods of time.” That’s the device that grabbed national attention recently when an NFL player was detained at an airport after authorities found the prosthetic in his luggage, along with a packet of dehydrated urine.

All try to convince folks that their product will allow a drug user to pass a drug test and at least one sells its products through retail outlets in Soldotna and Wasilla.

Now they face a skeptical Congress. The House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations subpoenaed the records of the nation’s five largest anti-drug testing companies, requiring them to turn over any medical proof of the effectiveness of the products they sell and any complaints or lawsuits associated with their products.

It’s about time that someone cracked down on these flimflam artists and controlled what appears to be a multi-million-dollar growth industry that puts innocent people at risk. Drug testing adulteration and substitution will not stop until Congress decides to take some strong action to truly punish federally regulated employees and applicants who choose to attempt to cheat.

As Kenneth Edgell, the former director of the Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance, noted: “tampering with drug tests is a bad thing and a serious safety concern. When people do so, it is probably because they want to continue using drugs while also continuing to perform safety-sensitive duties. Continuing to do both these things is precisely what the DOT drug-testing program, in the interest of safety, is designed to prevent.”

There are three ways to beat a drug test: drinking huge quantities of fluids combined with diuretics to produce specimens that are too diluted to accurately test; substituting a “clean” urine; and adding some ingredient to “fool” the screening test such as bleach, oven cleaner and Visine.

Third-party administrators like WorkSafe carefully train their staff to deter specimen tampering through rigidly controlled collection protocols. Our laboratory uses sophisticated countermeasures to detect specimen tampering and often uncovers community-wide patterns. But we, like our counterparts



around the country, are concerned by the lengths some drug users go to try to beat a drug test. They are resourceful, creative and have little fear that their misconduct will truly have a consequence.

The human cost of an adulterated or substituted drug specimen can be extremely fatal, as it was in the case of a school bus driver with a load of kids who crashed into a bridge because he was high on cocaine. Three days earlier, he had tested negative by substituting a specimen for his own.

The Chair of the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations plans to propose federal regulation by year's end. WorkSafe and our trade organization, the Substance Abuse Program Administrators Association, will closely monitor the situation because it's in everyone's best interest to beat the drug testing cheats.

*Stephen Mihalik, WorkSafe's General Manger, is a sitting member of the SAPAA board of directors. SAPAA was invited to Washington DC to speak about the use of these products in the Workplace.*