



Building a Safe Harbor for Vermont Elders through Advocacy and Education

COVE TESTIMONY RE SALES TAX ON SUPPLEMENTS

3/18/14 - Gini Milkey, Executive Director

Good afternoon. I'm Gini Milkey, Executive Director of COVE, the Community of Vermont Elders.

COVE's mission is to promote and protect a higher quality of life for Vermont's elders, through education and advocacy. The needs, concerns, safety and well-being of elders who are economically disadvantaged, physically or mentally challenged, or geographically or socially isolated, are a central focus of our public policy work.

Taxing dietary supplements would impose yet another economic burden on elders living on fixed incomes. COVE strongly opposes doing so.

Many elders use dietary supplements to maintain better health, prevent and treat chronic conditions, or strengthen their immune systems. They also may, especially when working with physicians knowledgeable about nutrition and disease, use supplements in lieu of expensive prescription drugs. We believe that elders as a group may use proportionally more supplements than people in other age groups, and therefore they will be disproportionately impacted by this tax.

Why on earth would we want to punish people who are taking responsibility for their own wellness by making them pay more to do so? It is completely inconsistent with our health care reform efforts, and for elders – and others - who have low incomes and who struggle