

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

WILLIAM R. SPENCER, M.D.
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR
EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT
15 PARK CIRCLE, SUITE 209
CENTERPORT, NY 11721



CONTACT: **MARK MALIZIA**
LEGISLATIVE AIDE
OFFICE: (631) 854-4500
FAX: (631) 854-4503
mark.malizia@suffolkcountyny.gov

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 9, 2014

Spencer, Gregory Bring Fight to D.C. to End Unregulated Deadly Market of Caffeine Products

WASHINGTON, D.C. - On December 9th, two Suffolk lawmakers spent the day lobbying the federal government to follow the lead of Suffolk County. After the County enacted a Local Law to ban the sale of powdered caffeine to minors earlier this year, Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory and Suffolk County Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. aggressively pushed Congress to enact federal legislation and the FDA to restrict the use of this dangerous product.

"The bottom line is that a simple mistake in how powdered caffeine products are used can lead and have led to loss of life," stated Legislator Spencer. "These products entice consumers by promising to give extra energy, focus, weight loss, and even increased sports abilities, without addressing the significant dangers that they pose. The health risks are especially hazardous for our youth and even small amounts can lead to overdose."

Where powdered caffeine differs from other sources of the stimulant is in its dosing. Due to the high concentration of caffeine found in small amounts of its powdered form, even a simple error in calculation of dosage can lead to an overdose. The recommended dosage of this drug is 1/16th of a TEASPOON. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to measure a safe amount of this drug for personal use. While U.S. consumer culture often subscribes to the "more is better" theory, in the case of powdered caffeine, *more can be deadly*.

"Powdered caffeine is a dangerous health threat to everyone, but especially to minors," said Presiding Officer Gregory. "A single teaspoon of powdered caffeine is the equivalent of 25 cups of coffee, and the potential for overdose and abuse is a clear and present danger. We are hopeful the FDA will adopt a similar ban and carefully regulate dosage recommendations, along with requiring prominent warning labels."

The Suffolk County law was prompted by the case of Logan J. Stiner of LaGrange, Ohio. In May of 2014, Logan, a model high school student who had a bright future ahead of him, tragically passed away from an overdose of powdered caffeine. His parents, Dennis and Katie, joined Legislators Gregory and Spencer in Washington, D.C..

The day in Washington included the Legislators, Logan Stiner's parents, and the *Center for Science in the Public Interest*, meeting with United States Senators Richard Shelby of Alabama, Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, Edward Markey of Massachusetts, Sherrod Brown of Ohio, and Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut. It also included the group directly meeting with the FDA and urging them to classify pure caffeine as a drug and implement protective regulations including the ban of the sale of the product to minors.

Powdered caffeine is 100% pure caffeine and misuse, accidental or intentional, leads to caffeine overdose. Given the trend of powdered caffeine products being irresponsibly used by minors and how simple mistakes could lead to serious health problems, Suffolk County continues to stress the need for nationwide, immediate, and comprehensive action.

"As we waited for the federal and state government to act on protecting our children's health, we did what we could in Suffolk County by proactively prohibiting the sale of powdered caffeine to minors," said Legislator Spencer. "Caffeine is an addictive chemical and in its concentrated powder form there is a greater risk of poisoning for children who may use this product as a recreational drug."

###