



New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA)

July 25, 2023

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

RE: NYSPHA Recommends the Governor sign S582/A6798 (Hoyleman/Lee), which prohibits the sale of sodium nitrate and sodium nitrite to any person under the age of twenty-one.

Dear Governor Hochul,

The New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA) is pleased to provide our recommendations to you on these bills, which have passed both houses of the legislature. NYSPHA is the New York affiliate of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and serves as the statewide organization for members from all disciplines across the spectrum of public health professionals, organizations, academia, and students pursuing careers in public health. Our mission is to improve the public's health through advocacy, education, networking, and professional development.

NYSPHA Recommends the Governor sign S582/A6798 (Hoyleman/Lee), which prohibits the sale of sodium nitrate and sodium nitrite to any person under the age of twenty-one.

New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA) supports bills S582/A6798 and recommends that you sign it as soon as possible. Concerned with the increase in suicide rate among those aged 15 to 24, which has seen an increase of 45% since 2009 in New York State, we support the restriction of the sale of sodium nitrate and sodium nitrite to those under 21 years of age. A literature review of 35 studies provided evidence that approximately 91% of those that ingested sodium nitrite for suicidal intent were between 15 and 39 years old. According to the World Health Organization, suicide related deaths are approximately 703,000 annually, of which over 50% are under the age of 50. Therefore, we support age checks for anyone attempting to purchase sodium nitrate and sodium nitrite.

Ingesting sodium nitrate or sodium nitrite may lead to acute intoxication, poisoning and can result in death. Sodium nitrite is used as a food preservative for meat products to inhibit bacterial growth, is easily affordable and available through different venues, such as online purchasing. This has led to an increase in its use among young people, leading to adverse effects and contributing to an increase in suicide rates.

NYSPHA's Recommendation.

We respectfully recommend that the Governor to sign NYSPHA Recommends the Governor sign S582/A6798 (Hoyleman/Lee), which prohibits the sale of sodium nitrate and sodium nitrite to any person under the age of twenty-one.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Guthrie Birkhead MD".

Guthrie Birkhead, MD, MPH
Chair, Policy and Advocacy Committee
New York State Public Health Association
advocacy@nyspha.org

Reference:

Padovano, M., Aromatario, M., D'Errico, S., Concato, M., Manetti, F., David, M. C., ... & Fineschi, V. (2022). Sodium Nitrite Intoxication and Death: Summarizing Evidence to Facilitate Diagnosis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(21), 13996.