

## The United States Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) Marks “World Standards Day” with Calls for Minimum Quality Standards for Dietary Supplements

*AARP, Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute and Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia  
Highlight Benefits of Standardization*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Rockville, Md., October 8, 2015 --** On October 14, the international standards community celebrates “World Standards Day”. Standards are so ubiquitous, that it is easy to take them for granted. The basic concept is simple – standards define what a given product can and should be or do. Standards help ensure the plug will fit into the socket, the ATM will communicate with your bank, the car will not pollute the environment and the medicine will be in the bottle in the appropriate amount. In doing so, standards help facilitate commerce, protect property and promote public health.

The United States Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) sets quality standards for both medicines and dietary supplements. Even though the standards are created using the same collaborative, transparent and public methods, the two categories of products are regulated differently. Medicines quality is standardized – meaning medicines sold in the US are required to comply with [USP’s official quality standards](#). This is to help ensure a given medicine will be of similar quality regardless of where it is made or by whom. USP standards are voluntary for supplement manufacturers.

This World Standards Day – USP calls for wider use of public standards for dietary supplements and together with some of our stakeholders, we’d like to highlight some of the benefits standardization can and should provide.

USP standards provide tests that help define several quality attributes: **identity** (is the product what it claims to be); **potency** (is it present in the right amount); **purity** (is it free from contaminants or other unwanted ingredients); and **performance** (will it dissolve in the body so the active ingredient can be absorbed.)

“Without any industry oversight, we cannot guarantee that what the label says on the bottle is actually in the bottle,” explained Dr. Daniel Neides – Medical Director of [Cleveland Clinic’s Wellness Institute](#). Dr. Neides recommends brands that are clearly marked with the USP label because “It’s important for us to prescribe products that are pharmaceutical grade. You need to know what is in each capsule.”

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Sarah Erush, PharmD, BCPS - pharmacy clinical manager at the [Children's Hospital of Philadelphia](#) and a member of the hospital's Therapeutic Standards Committee agrees. "Studies have shown that in some supplements the amounts can vary greatly from pill to pill. Dosage is important, especially for children. That's why our hospital recommends using only supplements whose quality has been verified by an independent third party like USP."

Quality is equally important to consumers. "AARP is aware that dietary supplements are increasingly popular among older Americans," said Leigh Purvis of [AARP's Public Policy Institute](#). "Consequently, we are very concerned by reports that raise questions about quality. For example, some products marketed as "all-natural supplements" have been found to contain active pharmaceuticals. That's one reason why AARP supports public quality standards for dietary supplements and encourages consumers to look for supplements whose quality has been verified by an independent third party like USP."

USP believes standardized quality of medicines in the United States has helped promote and protect public health for nearly 200 years and we believe dietary supplement consumers expect and deserve the same protections.

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### **USP – Global Expertise, Trusted Standards, Improved Health**

The U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) is a global health organization that improves lives through public standards and related programs that help ensure the quality, safety, and benefit of medicines and foods. USP's standards are used worldwide. For more information about USP visit <http://www.usp.org>