

BACKGROUND ON BUSINESS

More Americans Using Vitamins

(NAPS)—A health conscious America is increasing its usage of vitamins and nutritional supplements as more people recognize the correlation between good health and quality of life.

According to 'Eating Patterns in America', an annual study produced by the international marketing information research company The NPD Group, Americans no longer see nutritional aids as something that a doctor should recommend. The study, the most comprehensive report of its kind, said that shift in consumer opinion has resulted in a vitamin boom. NPD found that 66 percent of Americans now take vitamins, mineral supplements, herbal products or other dietary aids regularly, with 45 percent of Americans doing so daily.

A recent survey by The Gallup Study of vitamin usage in the U.S. has found that approximately 75 percent of vitamin users are over the age of 35 and this rapidly growing segment is expected to exceed 150 million people by the year 2005. As a result of such growth in vitamin and supplement usage, the U.S. market for such products is now estimated to be in excess of \$10 billion.

Another strong indication of this growing market is the increased interest in vitamin and supplement store franchises across the country.

"As the largest nationwide specialty retailer of vitamin and mineral supplements, sports nutrition products and herbs, we are seeing demand for our stores exploding in all areas of the U.S.," said Rus-



sell L. Cooper, senior vice president and general manager of GNC Franchising, a subsidiary of General Nutrition Companies, Inc.

Cooper said that the company's strong franchisee training and support programs are also attractive to prospective franchise operators. In addition, GNC's financing packages are among the best in the franchising industry, offering qualified would-be franchisees a variety of savings options.

GNC is consistently ranked as one of America's top overall franchising opportunities by leading franchising industry magazines, and was recently named by *Entrepreneur* magazine as the number one franchise in the vitamin and nutritional supplement sector for the 12th consecutive year and the ninth best franchise opportunity overall out of 500 leading franchises.

For more information regarding GNC Franchising, Inc., call 1-800-766-7099; write to: 300 Sixth Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222; or visit: www.gncfranchising.com.