FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Ad Claiming Herbal Tea Lowers Cholesterol
Questioned by Better Business Bureaus

An explosion of inquiries to Better Business Bureaus (BBBs) has resulted from a nationwide newspaper advertising campaign touting Cho Low Tea, which is claimed to be "as effective as medically prescribed drugs in lowering cholesterol." The ads also claim the tea "aids in the digestion of fatty foods and reduces water retention."

In addition, the ads incorrectly claim that Cho Low Tea is a member of the Better Business Bureau. The company is NOT a member of any BBB. As all applicants and members of Better Business Bureaus are made aware, BBBs never endorse any product, service or company. Consumers should not be deceived into thinking Cho Low Tea is endorsed by the BBB. Cho Low Tea of Sun Valley, California, is the trade name for Virginia Investments Limited of Beverly Hills, California.

The Better Business Bureau is seeking substantiation from the company for the following claims made in the advertisements:

"New Tea from China Reduces Cholesterol"

"Medical studies prove it!...as effective as medically prescribed drugs in lowering cholesterol."

"...researchers were astonished to discover that besides aiding weight loss, Cho Low tea contains natural cholesterol-reducing properties."

(more)
"Cho Low Tea: 100% Safe And Natural"

"You'll Feel Better, You'll Look Better!

"...lowers cholesterol, it aids in the digestion of fatty foods and reduces water retention."

"Doctors and Scientists Give Cho Low Tea Their Seal of Approval."

"Go Ahead, Eat Your Favorite Foods!"

"Don't cut out your favorite foods. Cut out this coupon instead."

The ad attributes quotes to numerous doctors and scientists who supposedly have given the tea their "seal of approval" and also contains an endorsement by a television actor who plays a police commissioner in a daytime soap opera.

The Council of Better Business Bureaus (CBBB), headquarters for the Bureau system, and the BBB in Cypress, California, in whose service area the company is located, have also brought the ads to the attention of law enforcement and regulatory authorities, including the Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Trade Commission and the U. S. Postal Inspection Service.

CBBB has been contacted by the American Newspaper Publishers Association/Credit Bureau, Inc. which has received inquiries from at least 50 newspapers approached to run the ad. The association contacted the CBBB because some newspapers had questioned the claims made in the ad and the fact that the company claimed BBB membership.

Cho Low Tea ads appeared in newspapers across the country including The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, Orange County Register, Worcester Telegram and Gazette, Riverside (CA)
While the BBB has not had an opportunity to review any of the studies supporting the startling claims by Cho Low Tea, BBBs always advise that, when evaluating any health claims in advertising, consumers should

- Read advertisements carefully; separate information from puffery; and recognize meaningless cliches and empty promises.
- Be wary of claims for quick, easy and painless cures.
- Be wary of claims that the product is the result of scientific breakthroughs and extensive research, and has been proven in clinical studies, often conducted in Europe.
- Be cautious of testimonials, particularly those that can't be verified. Testimonials should not serve as a substitute for scientific proof of a product's effectiveness.

More information about evaluating medical and health claims in advertising can be found in "Tips on Medical Quackery," available from the CBBB and local Better Business Bureaus.

The Council of Better Business Bureaus (CBBB) promotes ethical standards of business practices and protects consumers through voluntary self-regulation and monitoring activities. Supported through the membership of private business, the CBBB is not a government agency and is not supported by tax dollars. CBBB members include major businesses and more than 175 Better Business Bureaus in the United States (19 in Canada).

Programs include a self-regulatory mechanism to assure truth and accuracy in advertising; a mediation/arbitration service for resolving consumer-business disputes; an advisory service which sets standards for charitable organizations and distributes information about thousands of soliciting organizations; consumer information services and voluntary industry guidelines for advertising and selling products and services.