

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ Member of Parliament

Thousands of Canadians have voiced concerns to their MPs about the threat to their personal health, to Canadian businesses and to our constitutional rights posed by the Natural Health Product (NHP) Regulations. Many MPs have responded with information that is *factually incorrect*.

For example, MPs have assured Canadians "*that NHPs are regulated separately from drugs*". Other MPs have stated that those talking about restricted access to NHPs are simply "*fearmongering*" and that these concerns are "*based on little if any actual facts*". Or that an on-line system to process NHP license submissions at a faster rate will solve the problems. These statements are incorrect and ignorant of the facts.

**FACT** – After overwhelming public protests in 1997 *against* regulating NHPs as drugs, the government told Canadians and the natural health industry that NHPs would be given a third, separate category, distinct from Foods or Drugs. Yet in 2004, Health Canada placed NHPs as a *subset* of 'Drugs'. They assigned NHPs a definition virtually identical, verbatim, to that of pharmaceuticals. It is still the case that only two categories exist: Food and Drugs.

**FACT** – As 'Drugs', NHPs are forced to make an efficacy claim; and then to prove that claim. Thousands of multiple ingredient products have to perform human trials for each unique combination of safe and effective ingredients. Since NHPs are not patentable, such trials are unaffordable and are forcing countless valued products off the market.

**FACT** – Health Canada's 'Drug' approval system was designed for single-molecule, patentable pharmaceuticals. NHPs are not patentable and are extremely complex. (Ginger, for example, contains over 400 identified compounds.) The drug approval system cannot be fairly applied, a fact clearly established by the Standing Committee on Health.

**FACT** – Since products can still be sold while waiting for approval, there is clearly no risk to Canadians. The total number of deaths caused by NHPs, since records began, is zero (0). The total number of licenses refused by Health Canada to date on alleged safety grounds is three (3). However, applications under the Freedom of Information Act for details of these refusals have been ignored; even these refusals remain unexamined.

**FACT** – Since the regulations began, Canadian consumers have already lost retail access to over 20,000 US products (stopped at the border, though legal on shelves in the US) and over 20,000 Canadian products due to license refusals – all products consumed safely for generations. These numbers do not reflect countless additional losses from reputable producers deciding to shelve innovative formulas to avoid the onerous regulatory process.

**FACT** – The loss of products is not due to a backlog of applications, although this is exacerbating the problem. Health Canada is withholding approval to thousands of multi-ingredient products due to difficulties with the process. Many companies have applications for multiple ingredient products awaiting approval for 5 years or more.

**FACT** – Cost recovery schemes being instituted by Health Canada are further driving up prices of remaining NHPs.

One way or another Health Canada seems intent on 'pharmaceuticalizing' NHPs so that only the big players can afford to stay in business. Your constituents have businesses going under right now. The process has cost taxpayers millions of dollars with the benefit to Canadian consumers being negligible at best. In fact, evidence exists that Canadians are suffering acutely from the loss of access to the safe and effective products they need, not just for maintaining wellness but for controlling chronic, painful and sometimes life-threatening conditions.

**Solution – The 2004 NHP Regulations must be suspended and reviewed by the current Standing Committee on Health, publicly and without influence, to give NHPs a true third category as promised by Parliament.**

As my MP, elected to represent my welfare, I demand to know what you are doing to ensure that my constitutional right to choose how to care for myself, and my fair access to safe and effective NHPs, will be protected from the interests of big business and self-serving bureaucracy.

Respectfully yours,

Signed

Dated

Name

Signature:

Date:

Additional Comments/Questions:

**A Letter regarding the Natural Health Product Regulations**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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POSTAGE**

\_\_\_\_\_ **M.P.**

**House of Commons  
Parliament Buildings  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6**