

----- Original Message -----

**From:** [bruce.stanton@parl.gc.ca](mailto:bruce.stanton@parl.gc.ca)

**To:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sent:** Friday, May 31, 2013 1:24 PM

**Subject:** RE: Natural Health Products (NHPs)

Dear Ann:

Thank you for your recent correspondence on Natural Health Products. I appreciate your comments and welcome the opportunity to respond.

Maintaining the health and safety of Canadians is a priority for the Government of Canada. Health Canada's mandate is to ensure that Canadians have access to the safest possible products. The Natural Health Product Regulations (NHPRs) help assure that Canadians have access to a range of natural health products (NHPs) that are safe, effective, and of high quality, while respecting freedom of choice and philosophical and cultural diversity.

The Natural Health Products Directorate (NHPD) accepts a variety of evidence to support health claims. Health claims made for a product are assessed based on the credibility, strength and quality of evidence provided. Different types of claims require different levels of evidence. The evidence must support that the benefits of the product outweigh any risks. Therefore, the higher the claim and the risk associated with the product, the higher the standard of evidence that is required. Although generally considered to be lower risk products, NHPs can in fact pose a serious risk to health.

Over the past two years Health Canada has received 500 serious adverse reaction reports and have recalled over 40 products due to serious health risks. Safety concerns may include product contamination or adulteration, those related to specific ingredients, unsubstantiated health claims, and interactions with other products.

The pre-market review of these products is essential in helping to ensure these products are safe, effective and of high quality for consumers.

The Canadian NHP market is growing and successful, increasing by four percent in 2007 and five percent in 2008. As of the beginning of October 2010, the Department of Health had issued 24,481 product licences (identified by an NPN or DIN-HM on product labels) representing 32,511 NHPs. There are now seven times as many NHPs as over-the-counter drugs licensed by Health Canada. Canada's framework is considered a model, placing our nation ahead of other countries by having assessed tens of thousands of products and having authorized hundreds of different health claims. There is also a strong indication that the Canadian regulatory system for NHPs has led to an increase in foreign sales of Canadian products, which is proving beneficial to Canadian-based companies.

The NHPD continues to improve its process of reviewing licence applications, lowering review times dramatically. A two-fold increase in productivity was attained in 2008-2009. In addition, the NHPD has held numerous training and information workshops across Canada, as well as Internet sessions, to assist Canadian and American industry in understanding the NHPRs, and to guide them in preparing their licence applications.

Ongoing information updates and outreach are key components of the NHPD's process improvement focus. Information sheets for consumers, health professionals, and retailers are available on our website at [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/prodnatur/fiche\\_info\\_sheets-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/prodnatur/fiche_info_sheets-eng.php).

I appreciate you bringing these concerns to my attention. I hope the information above is helpful.

Sincerely,

Bruce Stanton  
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