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LEADING ASSOCIATION CALLS ON POLITICAL LEADERS TO PROTECT CANADIANS' GREATEST ASSET—THEIR HEALTH

Ottawa, ON—On April 28th, Canada is facing its most important federal election in its history. While elected officials' are busy talking about tariffs, taxes, and Trump, the threat to Canadians' health rights and access to the natural health products **34 MILLION CANADIANS** rely on for their health have been largely overlooked. Canada's Natural Health Product Protection Association (NHPPA) calls on political leaders to remedy this situation by standing up for Canadians' greatest asset—their health.

NHPPA is calling on political leaders to: protect Canadians' health rights, stop regulating natural health products like pharmaceutical drugs, discontinue crushing the natural health products industry and pricing out consumers through excessive regulation, and ensure access to natural health products including traditional medicines.

Says Shawn Buckley, LLB, a lawyer who has been conducting legal advocacy for natural health products (NHPs) for 30 years, and the president of the [NHPPA](http://nhppa.org): “On the current regulatory trajectory, Canadians' will have fewer and fewer natural options outside of pharmaceutical drugs to manage their health. **The impacts will be significant.**”

IMPACT #1: THE LOSS OF OUR HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY

Elected officials are Canadians' voice in Parliament, but government overreach threatens the tools 34 million (82%) Canadians depend on for their health. It is clear that our so-called “responsible government” lost sight of its responsibility to Canadians. **Losing access to natural health products means losing our freedom to choose how we manage our health.** Government decisions are backing Canadians into a corner where pharmaceutical drugs are increasingly the main option, despite Canadians' desire to use natural remedies. This may cause further strain on our medical system as many drugs have pages-long lists of side-effects that may require medical attention.

IMPACT #2: THE BUSINESS AND JOB LOSS IMPACT

Canada's once vibrant natural health products industry is at risk due to pharmaceutical-style regulations being forced on it. Health Canada now demands onerous product testing and other requirements. With exorbitant fines of up to \$5 million dollars a day for violations of its draconian regulations, this once-flourishing industry is unlikely to withstand these crushing pressures.



In a survey of Canada’s natural health industry, **75% of brands indicated that there is a very high or high chance they will need to pull product from the market** as a result of Health Canada’s regulations. A **shocking 20% (minimum) are seriously considering leaving the Canadian market altogether**. Innovative new products and international brands have no incentive to bring their products to Canada due to the regulatory burden they face to do so.ⁱ

Many natural health practitioners like naturopaths, herbalists, homeopaths, and others may be forced out of practice, as they will no longer have access to the natural health products that are their essential tools in supporting their clients/patients.

Costly red tape threatens this once flourishing industry as a growing number of businesses may close their doors forever, sell to pharmaceutical giants, or lay off workers. The industry is already feeling the strain, which is sure to worsen in the years ahead, **resulting in a loss of livelihoods and jobs many Canadians rely on to feed their families**.

IMPACT #3: THE COST CRISIS—CANADIANS WILL BE PRICED OUT

Canadians are facing skyrocketing food and housing prices, two essentials for life. The government’s own National Advisory Council on Poverty 2024, found: “Overall, this year’s conversation about poverty felt heavier than in the past, somehow more urgent. More and more individuals are in survival mode, seeking some sort of stability amid rising costs.”ⁱⁱ It noted: it is time for “urgent action.”

Instead of taking measures to make other essentials like health more affordable, the government’s regulations are driving up costs on natural health products, making them increasingly unaffordable for many Canadians. As natural health companies face growing costs, these costs will be passed down to consumers, resulting in higher prices on the products Canadians rely on to lessen pain, improve sleep, balance mood, reduce stress, and more. This will essentially price many Canadians completely out of the market or be forced to rely on higher-risk pharmaceutical drugs.

Buckley worries: “Unless there is urgent action, many natural health products will disappear altogether. Those that remain will undoubtedly be priced out of many Canadians’ budgets.”

IMPACT #4: ERASING MILLENIA OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINES AND PRACTICES

Canadians of all backgrounds rely on traditional medicines, including: Indigenous Medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Kampo (Japanese), African herbal medicine, and Western herbal medicine, among others. Elimination of these medicines threatens the health and culture of Canada’s multicultural communities, as these natural remedies also have deep cultural significance.



Indigenous Peoples of Canada have been using their traditional medicines for millenia with impressive results, yet **Health Canada’s regulatory changes may impact Indigenous Peoples’ access to their traditional medicine**. Their right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), entrenched in Article 24 (1) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which is law in Canada, may have been impacted when the government decided to regulate natural health products like pharmaceutical drugs.

It states: “Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals...”ⁱⁱⁱ FPIC ensures “effective and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in decisions that affect them, their communities, and territories.”^{iv} “...FPIC describes processes that are *free* from manipulation or coercion, *informed* by adequate and timely information, and occur sufficiently *prior* to a decision so that Indigenous rights and interests can be incorporated or addressed effectively as part of the decision making process...”^v

What Can Canadians Do?

- Meet with the political candidates in your riding. Inform them that their support for natural health products is important to you.
- Send a letter to your local representatives.
- Subscribe to our newsletter. In the days leading up to the election, NHPPA will share critical updates and action items you can take to make a difference.

The **Natural Health Product Protection Association (NHPPA)** is a Canadian not-for-profit organization that has been advocating for the protection of natural health products and dietary supplements since 2008. It has been working hard for seventeen years with many wins but seeks the help of elected officials to avoid the devastating trajectory the industry faces, with significant consequences to Canadians’ health. The NHPPA publishes a newsletter to help Canadians stay informed regarding the critical issues facing the natural health products at: <https://nhppa.org/subscribe>.

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ⁱ “NHPs: Save Our Supplements,” <https://chfa.ca/advocacy/nhps-save-our-supplements/>.

ⁱⁱ The National Advisory Council on Poverty, Government of Canada, “A Time for Urgent Action: the 2024 report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty,” 2024. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/poverty-reduction/national-advisory-council/reports/2024-annual.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://afn.bynder.com/m/6f193cedd91dfb0/original/79-2023-Reconsider-Proposed-Distinctions-Based-Indigenous-Health-Legislation-Process.pdf>

^{iv} <https://Justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/about-afn.html>

^v <https://Justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/about-afn.html>