



The Subcommittee on Human Rights and Wellness

Chairman Dan Burton (R ~ IN)

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NATURE'S ALTERNATIVE: CHAIRMAN BURTON TO EXAMINE THE BENEFITS OF DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

Washington, D.C. – Many Americans benefit from the use of dietary supplements such as vitamins, minerals, amino acids, herbs, and other botanicals. Surveys estimate that more than 70 percent of the U.S. population – that is seven out of 10 Americans – use dietary supplements as a safe, effective, and affordable way to maintain a high quality of personal health and augment inadequate diets. Not only have dietary supplements been proven to contribute to good health, but they also help fuel jobs and grow the economy. A recent Institutes of Medicine (IOM) report, sponsored by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA), estimates that American consumers spend \$18 billion annually on dietary supplements, and that there about 29,000 products on the market – with another 1,000 new products introduced each year.

Congressman Dan Burton (R-IN), Chairman of the U. S. House Government Reform Subcommittee on Human Rights & Wellness, will hold an oversight hearing, entitled **“Dietary Supplements: Nature’s Answer to Cost Effective Preventative Medicine,” on Wednesday, September 22, 2004, in Room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building at 10:00 a.m.** The Subcommittee plans to discuss the use of dietary supplements as an integral means of preventative medicine in an individual’s health care regimen. In addition, the Subcommittee will examine the possible cost savings to the U.S. health care system by using various supplements as a preventative measure to ensure well-being.

Stated Chairman Burton, “It is becoming increasingly evident that a majority of Americans are now enjoying the various benefits of dietary supplements. I believe that when used responsibly, and in consultation with a primary care physician, these products can greatly enhance an individual’s overall personal health.”

Currently, there are approximately 17,000 health product stores across the United States that distribute safe, effective, and affordable dietary supplements to millions of Americans each year. The *Nutrition Business Journal* states that market sales of dietary supplements, which include vitamins, minerals, botanicals, and other specialty items, reached \$19.8 billion in 2003.

Scientific studies have shown how vitamins help prevent chronic diseases, which can save billions of dollars in health care costs. For instance, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that the top diet-related medical conditions – heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes – cost the U.S. more than \$33 billion annually.

In 1994, Congress passed the *Dietary Supplement Health & Education Act* (DSHEA). DSHEA was the first piece of legislation that fully defined dietary supplements and dietary ingredients. Specifically, DSHEA prescribed procedures detailing how the FDA ought to regulate the dietary supplements industry. Under this law, manufacturers are required to follow specific guidelines in order for their products to be classified as a legitimate dietary supplement. The FDA guarantees the quality of dietary supplements by enforcing Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs). Currently, dietary supplement manufacturers must abide by food GMPs, however, the FDA is developing a new set of GMPs specifically for supplements that will hold manufacturers to even higher standards for the potency, cleanliness, and efficacy of their products. In addition, DSHEA established a new framework for assuring product safety by empowering the FDA with the ability to recall any dietary supplement products they deem unsafe. Chairman Burton sponsored the *DSHEA Full Implementation & Enforcement Act of 2004* (H.R. 4760), to ensure that the goals of DSHEA are completely met by authorizing the necessary implementation and enforcement funds. The bill is still pending action.

The Subcommittee has invited a wide range of expert witnesses to provide testimony on the latest government oversight activities and industry developments with regard to dietary supplements.

PANEL ONE WITNESS:

The Honorable Paul Coates, Ph.D.

Director
Office of Dietary Supplements
National Institutes of Health
United States Department of Health and Human Services

PANEL TWO WITNESSES:

Mr. Allen Dobson, Ph.D.

Senior Vice President
The Lewin Group

Mr. Jeffrey Blumberg, Ph.D.

Professor
Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy
Tufts University

Ms. Barbara Levine, R.D., Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Nutrition in Medicine
Weill College of Medicine
Cornell University

Mr. Elliott Balbert

President
Dietary Supplements Education Alliance

Ms. Marilu Henner

Actress, Nutrition & Diet Expert

This is a follow-up to the Subcommittee's March 24th hearing earlier this year. For more information, or to access hearing resource materials, please visit the Subcommittee's website at www.reform.house.gov/WHR.