

To the Health Select Committee

## OBJECTION to the Therapeutic Products Bill

This is a written objection informing you of my opposition to the proposed Therapeutic Products Bill amendments.

It appears that the current Labour government is intent on limiting and controlling our ability to freely access natural health products including vitamin and mineral supplements, traditional Maori remedies, homeopathic remedies, herbal remedies, traditional Chinese medicine, condiments and animal products such as deer velvet and fish oil capsules for health and wellbeing purposes. It is a fundamental right to use and benefit from what nature has freely provided and make our own decisions on how to manage our health. I strongly question why the government has this agenda to tighten and regulate our right to access products which serve our physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health and wellbeing.

Confidence in our medical system is at an all-time low and coupled with this we know that pharmaceutical drugs are one of the leading causes of harm, injury and death in the world, therefore it is unconscionable that restrictions and tightening of natural health products is being proposed.

To propose cinnamon (for example) be regulated is unfathomable when fatal medicine related deaths in New Zealand are of far greater concern. I note consumer safety as one of the concerns with which you state it is necessary to provide greater regulation. However there is no available data indicating safety concerns on the natural products you wish to control, but there is no shortage of data indicating the safety concerns, risks, adverse reactions, side effects and worse from pharmaceutical products which I believe are part of an agenda to encourage greater Big Pharma influence and control in our country.

Published medical paper with data from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013 extracted from the National Coronial Information System indicating **703** medicine-related deaths. FYI searching for deaths on turmeric and coconut could not be found in a search. Please supply details if you have other data, unless you are searching and a death from coconut was indicated as being when one fell on the head of the unfortunate person under the tree. Please be advised - this does not count.

Link: [Fatal Toxicity Indices for Medicine-Related Deaths in New Zealand, 2008-2013 - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

New Zealand consumers are aware that research indicating findings on nutrition, diet and lifestyle factors provide proven health benefits. It is fair to say our kiwi identity is shaped to a large extent by the unique natural surrounds of land and sea which provide and give support to the health and wellbeing of our people as well as supporting an incredibly diverse and growing industry of health products, ingredients, and foods that are unique to our country. For example kawa kawa, green lipped mussels, bee pollen.

The holistic view to understanding the body and caring for the whole person is an approach to health which considers multidimensional aspects of wellness and using natural health products is strongly connected to this view as it harnesses the benefits of the products which are not part of the conventional allopathic model. The allopathic model strongly supports pharmaceutical usage

and while this has its place it cannot override evidence that health products have a valuable role to support wellbeing and enable favourable health outcomes.

Consumers in New Zealand must have this basic right to decide how they manage their own health and wellbeing and the government has no place in restricting access to natural health products unless this is part of an agenda to push unsuspecting New Zealanders into the alleopathic model for healthcare which is strongly under the authority of pharmaceutical companies. This pathway will lead to poorer health outcomes and loss of identity as a nation and for this the government will be responsible.

I therefore stand against the Therapeutic Products Bill and oppose the amendments which are yet again another attack on our freedoms and our rights to consume or use products of our choice. This is a disgraceful and shameful piece of legislation and has no place in New Zealand and if it comes to law you can be certain that we the people will ensure all those members of parliament that vote for this will be actively campaigned against and replaced with ethical, conscious thinking individuals who represent the true, healthy voice of New Zealanders.

Dr Guy Hatchard's Points to consider:

More than 50% of the NZ public use Natural Products. The structure of the proposed Bill is very concerning. It establishes a regulator who will be empowered to take decisions and control availability, it does not adequately specify what factors should influence his decisions. In other words, it is an enabling bill of the type favoured by repressive regimes. Someone will be deciding about and restricting our health options and choices.

There is absolutely no need to regulate Natural Health Products. The 2016 Natural Products Bill planned by Labour pre 2008 was eventually abandoned after careful consideration of its impact. As was the case then, I don't see any evidence that the public is being disadvantaged under current regulations nor is there any evidence they are being harmed by Natural Products. This is another area where the government has no need to tighten regulation.

The Bill will place additional financial burdens on manufacturers and end users and it will introduce uncertainty about products that have been sold and relied upon by millions of NZers. It will substantially raise the cost of Natural health Products as the Bill specifies that the manufacturers will be bearing the costs of extensive and unnecessary regulation.

It is an underhand move to structure the Bill as regulation without specifying content. This is designed to disperse and deflect public interest because as it stands the Natural Health Products section has little indication about possible actions of the regulator, it is a blank cheque. It is sneaky to have a short consultation period which spans the summer break.

The very long list of common herbals planned to be banned under the 2016 bill drawn up by Medsafe with the help of the International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities (funded by pharmaceutical interests) is still in existence. Some of these are even used regularly and traditionally in cooking. Under the Bill there is nothing to stop the new regulator from simply adopting this list as soon as appointed. This list would greatly disrupt the availability of traditional remedies which many NZers rely on to maintain their health.

Traditional medicine has its own standards of practice. It is of note that Indian traditional medicine Ayurveda would be particularly affected. Something of concern to a large segment of our population and incidentally the Indian government. The same is true of Chinese herbal medicine.

This is government overreach at its worst. The idea that a government appointed regulator can control the activities of dozens of complementary medicine practitioners is beyond absurd. Each system of complementary health care has its own internal standards which have proved quite sufficient for decades if not hundreds of years in some cases.

The 2016 MoH of permitted/restricted substances which will probably be adopted allowed more than 3000 synthetic additives to be used without adequate safety testing, but restricted traditional herbs that have been used safely for hundreds of years. Why would the government want to do this?