DSHEA Targeted

Senator John McCain's new bill could blame supplements for all adverse events.

Our right to take supplements is under attack, and yet again the target is our stronghold of health freedom: the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA). As we know, there has been a well-established pattern of attempting to weaken DSHEA with amendments and modifications. This time Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) has introduced, along with co-sponsor Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND), a bill that appears to be designed to restructure DSHEA in a way that could decimate the supplement industry.

This bill, the Dietary Supplement Safety Act of 2010, would impose new requirements on supplement makers. These rules would needlessly complicate the production of natural supplements, making it harder for manufacturers to focus on innovation and quality.

One especially damaging requirement would expand adverse event reporting (AER) regulations. Today, supplement manufacturers must report adverse events that are *serious*. Under McCain's bill, manufacturers would be required to report *all* adverse events, even the most minor and insignificant.

On the surface this might seem inconsequential to consumers. But in reality, it would be a momentous undertaking that would cripple the nutritional supplement industry and distract the Food and Drug Administration from far more critical matters it is now struggling to manage. In a worst-case scenario, this all-encompassing adverse event reporting amendment might even ultimately revoke our right to take supplements altogether.

Why Question Proven Safety?

Adverse event reporting for supplements is already a waste of time. These products have been shown to be overwhelmingly safe, not to mention

effective. However, there are times when even nutritional supplements are associated with adverse events they did not cause. Should McCain's bill pass, consumers experiencing everything from a runny nose to a small rash could blame their daily multivitamin—even if it has nothing to do with such incidents. The supplement industry would then be forced to collect, organize and submit millions of inane reports—a task that would cripple the industry's resources.

As the industry is bogged down with AER paperwork, these millions of associations between vitamins and adverse events could poison the public's mind against supplements. The FDA, meanwhile, would be caught up in the quagmire as well—wasting resources on nonsense instead of focusing on far more significant threats to the American public's well-being. A new definition of "adverse event" could trigger thousands of unjustified, frivolous lawsuits against supplement manufacturers. In a final crushing blow, insurance companies could drop all nutritional supplement industry coverage. Supplement manufacturers and health food stores could go out of business—all over something such as a runny nose.

Busy Work

The entire nutritional supplement industry is driven by the mission to help people establish and maintain well-being. John McCain's bill will hamper this mission by forcing the industry to waste time on meaningless busy work instead of developing cutting-edge nutritional formulas that promote peak health more than ever before.

The need for real work that protects our health freedom is urgent—so send a fax today, and send another fax tomorrow. Fax Senator John McCain at 202-228-2862 and tell him that you want DSHEA to be preserved, not modified and diminished. Fax bill co-sponsor Sen. Byron Dorgan at 202-224-1193, and let him know you want the supplement industry's resources focused where they are needed most—not on meaningless non-causal adverse events. Visit www.NHA2010.com to learn more about DSHEA and why we must protect and uphold it for the sake of our well-being. For health, freedom and liberty—join the NHA today! ❖

*This editorial is a public service announcement sponsored by the Nutritional Health Alliance (NHA).