

NHA/WASHINGTON

update*

Media Smears Mean Trouble

It appears that 2014 may bring significant challenges to health freedom.

Last year ended with a bang for enemies of health freedom. In December, the *Annals of Internal Medicine* published a critical editorial on multivitamins, concluding that “their use is not justified and they should be avoided.” Further, the journal stated that “the general population of supplement users have no micronutrient deficiencies.”

This editorial spawned many more news stories with damning headlines, ranging from probing questions (“Are Supplements A Waste of Money?” from Fox News) to outright condemnation (“Skip the Supplements” from *The New York Times*). Supplement-takers can breathe a sigh of relief, however: A little research shows that the negative multivitamin editorials appear to be way off base.

“No Micronutrient Deficiencies”

The *Annals* editorial suggests multivitamins are pointless because those who take them simply do not have micronutrient deficiencies. The Centers for Disease Control appears to disagree with this position. According to the CDC’s National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 34% of Americans don’t get enough vitamin A, 25% don’t get enough vitamin C, 70% don’t get enough vitamin D and 60% don’t get enough vitamin E. The picture for mineral consumption is no better: According to the CDC, 38% fail to get enough calcium and 45% fail to get enough magnesium.

While these figures may or may not indicate “deficiency” by definition,

they certainly suggest suboptimal nutrient intake, falling well short of the Recommended Daily Allowances (RDAs) as set by the US National Academy of Sciences Food and Nutrition Board.

This is significant because subopti-



mal intake—not just deficiency—may also have negative impact on health. According to a review published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, “Suboptimal intake of some vitamins, above levels causing classic vitamin deficiency, is a risk factor for [health problems] and common in the general population.”

The *Annals of Internal Medicine* editorial’s advice on nutritional intake seems to be at odds with the data presented by the CDC, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and many other authoritative bodies.

The *Annals* editorial is also at odds with some of the public: One out of every three Americans takes a multivitamin, equating to more than 100 million people. These health-conscious consumers take multivitamins to meet

the RDAs for nutrition and beyond. They don’t wish to merely avoid deficiency; they wish to unlock the vibrant wellness associated with robust nutritional health. But the media’s negative headlines would have them do otherwise.

Where There’s Smoke, There’s Fire

In the past, similar media smear campaigns against nutritional supplements have preceded major attacks on health freedom and our right to take vitamins. These smear campaigns almost seem designed to “soften up” the populace, so they won’t protest legislation against vitamins. As potentially destructive New Dietary Ingredient (NDI) guidelines for supplements still hang in the balance, is it any wonder that a rash of negative nutritional supplement headlines has broken out?

This may be a year of challenges to health freedom. Besides looming NDI guidelines, The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) has granted the FDA new power over supplements. And now media attacks on natural supplements may be setting the stage for far more devastating attacks.

Remain vigilant throughout 2014. Watch out for new assaults on vitamins that follow on the heels of early smear campaigns. When potentially destructive legislation does emerge, call or fax your local elected officials immediately to voice your support of health freedom. Continue visiting NHA2014.com for the latest updates and action plans. For the sake of health freedom, join the NHA today! ♦

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