

# NHA/WASHINGTON

update\*

## DSHEA Overhaul Proposed

*Classifying dietary supplements as drugs could limit the public's access.*

A scathing attack on the nutritional supplement industry recently published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* has some health freedom advocates fuming. In the article, titled “Hazards of Hindsight—Monitoring the Safety of Nutritional Supplements,” Dr. Pieter A. Cohen calls for “sweeping changes” in the way supplements are made available to health-conscious consumers.

With his aggressive rhetoric, Cohen appears to be proposing a complete dismantling of the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) that has protected our health freedom for 20 years. But Cohen’s reasoning does not seem to back up this radical overhaul, and his suggestions do not reflect the American public’s wishes on DSHEA.

### One Bad Apple

Cohen demands change because one supplement company—out of the thousands in existence—produced a tainted supplement. Cohen leverages this one company’s poor performance into an overarching condemnation of the entire supplement industry. Cohen then insists, “Every supplement ingredient should undergo rigorous safety testing before marketing.”

Curiously, Cohen’s demand mirrors the FDA’s first draft guidance on New Dietary Ingredients (NDI), which also proposed a pre-market review process for supplements. Years earlier, the first drafts on Adverse Event Reporting (AER) for supplements took the same strategy, attempting to place

vitamins in the same class as synthetic drugs. It is worth noting that these early NDI and AER drafts were quickly quashed after overwhelming protest by both the American public and our elected officials.

Regardless, forces at work continue



to target DSHEA by attempting to reclassify supplements as drugs. Here’s the scary part: The enemies of health freedom know exactly what they are doing with these tactics. If they ever succeeded in classifying supplements as drugs, they would destroy the core foundation upon which DSHEA is built—and the stronghold that protects our right to take supplements would come tumbling down.

If dietary supplements were treated as drugs requiring pre-market approval, those who take them to support their health would be out of luck. Prices for even the most basic daily multivitamin would skyrocket. Access to nutritional supplements would

be closed off, brick by brick, until consumers might find themselves suddenly needing a doctor’s prescription in order to get vitamin C. If you wanted a safe, natural herb that has been used in health traditions dating back thousands of years, your only option might be to venture out into the wilderness to harvest it yourself.

### Respect DSHEA!

Fortunately for health-conscious Americans, Cohen’s vision for our future simply does not match how the law works. DSHEA has already established that nutritional supplements are to be classified as foods—not drugs. DSHEA succeeded because 2.5 million citizens wanted it to. That’s how many people voiced their support of DSHEA in the largest letter-writing campaign to Congress in United States history—all to ensure we could keep our supplements, always.

Repeated attempts to reclassify supplements as drugs defy the American public. Even though we have expressed our desire to preserve DSHEA time and time again, it’s time to voice our support once more.

Please write to your elected officials and urge them to always treat supplements as foods. Remind them that under DSHEA, the FDA can warn, fine, seize, prosecute or close companies that distribute dishonest, dangerous or adulterated products. With these powers, the FDA seems to already have more than enough authority to protect the public—one would hope. For the sake of health freedom, visit [nha2014.com](http://nha2014.com) and join the Nutritional Health Alliance today! ❖

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