

# NHA/WASHINGTON

update\*

## Yes, Supplements Are Regulated

*Reckless journal reporting perpetuates fallacies about nutritional supplements.*

This past September, the *Journal of Public Health Management & Practice* published a report calling for state governments to increase regulation of dietary supplements in order to protect consumers. While the report focuses on supplements for weight management and muscle health, it also appears to make sweeping general criticisms of both supplements and the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) that protects our right to take them.

With additional rhetoric implying supplements are not sufficiently regulated, the *Journal's* report seems to be yet another sensationalized attack with a hidden agenda that warrants rebuttal.

### Check the Facts

The report leads by saying, "... Dietary supplements for weight loss or muscle building ... are not recommended by physicians." Not only do the authors expect us to believe that doctors never recommend soluble fiber to help with weight management or whey protein to assist with healthy muscle development, they seem to imply that doctors are simply opposed to nutritional supplementation. Contrary to the report's overtones, a 2009 *Nutrition Journal* piece reveals that 79% of physicians surveyed actually recommend nutritional supplements to their patients.

Next, the report asserts that "[Nutritional supplements] are often ineffective, adulterated, mislabeled or have unclear dosing recommendations, and consumers have suffered injury and death as a consequence."

Again, as phrased, the authors appear to be aggrandizing what are extremely rare occurrences in the nutritional supplement arena by saying they happen "often."

Back in reality, a 2008 supplement safety assessment revealed that only



600 nutritional supplement adverse events were reported in a span of six months. This equates to approximately one out of every 303,000 people taking a dietary supplement experiencing some kind of adverse event—an overwhelming validation of supplement safety and tolerability.

Finally, the report claims that DSHEA "stripped the Food and Drug Administration of its premarket authority, rendering regulatory controls too weak to adequately protect consumers." The authors seem to be perpetuating the fallacy that supplements are unregulated, when in fact the nutritional supplement industry is still regulated by the FDA.

What's more, while the *Journal* report seems to cast DSHEA as a villain

that forcefully "stripped" the FDA of power, the fact is that DSHEA was put in place 20 years ago because the American public vehemently believed in it—so much so that 2.5 million citizens wrote letters to Congress voicing their support of the act.

DSHEA remains today because health-conscious consumers want the freedom to take nutritional supplements as an affordable, accessible means of optimizing health. If DSHEA is dismantled, nutritional supplement health freedom may disappear altogether—which is why we must actively defend DSHEA against baseless, negative media attacks.

### Don't Waste State Resources

The *Journal of Public Health Management & Practice's* recent report seems to be just the latest in a long line of smear campaigns using underhanded tactics and half-truths in order to capture headlines and poison the public mind against safe, natural nutritional supplements—an irresponsible and reckless tactic that threatens both Americans' health freedom and health itself.

We must work to counter the report's call for increased state government regulation of supplements, and instead remind our elected officials that the supplement industry is already sufficiently regulated by the FDA. Why devote state resources to the regulation of supplements? They have enough to worry about!

Want to learn more? Visit [nha2014.com](http://nha2014.com) and join the fight to protect our right to take life-enhancing nutritional supplements. ♦

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