



Dr. James Lunney, MP
Nanaimo-Alberni

News Release

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Lunney's Natural Health Product Initiative Goes to Committee

OTTAWA—Dr. James Lunney, MP for Nanaimo-Alberni, congratulated all Members in the House of Commons for passing the second reading of Private Member's Bill C-420, which he originally introduced in the last session of Parliament. "The election interrupted progress on this bill, and I'm delighted to see it move forward this time around. Greater freedom of choice in personal health care is one step closer to becoming a reality," said Lunney.

Bill C-420, reintroduced in this Parliament by Lunney's colleague Dr. Colin Carrie, MP for Oshawa, would amend the definition of food in the Food and Drugs Act to include Natural Health Products, and amend the definition of drug to exclude food. "Most Canadians are shocked to learn that vitamins, minerals and other food products are drugs under Canadian law, and that any product can be reclassified as a drug just by making a claim that it has health benefits," said Lunney. "That is out of touch with modern science, and out of touch with the needs of Canadians."

The bill would also repeal antiquated clauses in the Act that prohibit claims of any kind on a list of diseases that include diabetes, heart disease and cancer. The move was originally recommended in 2000 by a team of seventeen experts appointed by the government to bring in new rules for Natural Health Products.

"These clauses have been used for years to take effective products, even those with the most scientific evidence behind them, off the market without evidence of harm," said Lunney. "The government has refused to listen to its own experts, who say these clauses do not reflect the prevailing science. It is time that our law caught up with science."

The bill will now go to the Standing Committee on Health, where it will be examined and possibly modified before coming back to the House. Lunney said the bill is a major step in the right direction for health care reform.

"Bill C-420 is about releasing the tremendous amount of information that supports the judicious use of natural health products, and it's about greater freedom of choice in personal health care. With a minority government, we have the opportunity to advance effectiveness and cost-effectiveness in health care," concluded Lunney.

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