

Paul Beckmann

From: Jennifer Hastings [jennifer.hastings@chc.org.au]
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To: CHC MEMBER
Subject: CHC Message to Members



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 For Immediate Release

MESSAGE TO MEMBERS

Serving up nonsense in the form of pick-me-up pills –
 Article by John Dwyer ([Sydney Morning Herald 25/01/2006, p15](#))

The Complementary Healthcare Council (CHC) is disappointed and concerned with the comments published in last Wednesday's Sydney Morning Herald, by Emeritus Professor John Dwyer regarding multivitamins and alternative therapies.

[Dr. Tony Lewis](#), Executive Director of the Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia (CHC) said, "Professor Dwyer has attacked the vitamin industry, medical insurers, the "alternative" healthcare industry, the Government and the TGA, industry practitioners and even pharmacists. His criticism is unwarranted and appears to be based on personal bias combined with a lack of understanding of the current legislative provisions of the Therapeutic Goods Act and the Therapeutic Goods Advertising Code. Articles such as this cannot be considered seriously by anybody."

Despite Professor Dwyer's prodigious qualifications and exalted title he has for many years adopted a closed mind approach concerning complementary medicines and alternative therapies and therapists. Several times in the article he refers to the scientific method. His approach is hardly an example of the scientific method in action. His position may be described as one of "my mind is already made up, don't confuse me with the facts!"

"It is pointless trying to address all the nonsense and misinformation in this article," Dr Lewis continued, "anybody with sound knowledge of the complementary healthcare industry, healthcare professionals and the regulator will dismiss the personal opinions of Professor Dwyer as just that."

The CHC's primary concern is that some consumers may be confused by this false and misleading information and that they may make an ill informed decision regarding their healthcare options. "Consumers must be protected from all forms of false and misleading information, including that pushed by Professor Dwyer," Dr Lewis emphasised.

By denying the well supported benefits of vitamins and their role in chronic disease prevention and in promoting wellness, the author's position conflicts with that of the government and of key medical organisations which recognise and support the value of complementary medicines and therapies in contributing to the health and wellbeing of Australians. Along with Professor Dwyer's attack on pharmacists who, in his words "...foist on (the public) preparations they know are useless", presumably Professor Dwyer, not only holds them and their professionalism in contempt, but also the 70% or more of Australians who regularly make informed decisions to use them.

The Australian Complementary Healthcare industry is leading the world in setting standards for complementary medicines and this includes the standards for advertising. The legislative provisions that exist today have been applauded by regulatory agencies around the world. Compliance with standards is closely monitored and the Therapeutic Goods Administration which regulates the industry is extremely pro-active in maintaining those standards.

The article focuses solely on highlighting perceived problems in the complementary healthcare industry. Of course nothing is perfect but his tunnel vision targeting of this industry does not acknowledge that there needs to be improvements in all areas of our current health system. It also fails to acknowledge that within complementary healthcare and other health sectors there are committed industry members, regulators, professionals and government representatives, all striving in a professional manner to improve the community's health outcomes.

The Complementary Healthcare Council on behalf of members strongly supports the community's right to challenge information and report concerns. We do not however support the 'trial by media' approach that focuses on selected information supporting an individual's bias. We remain confident that the vast majority of consumers of complementary medicines will not be misled by occasional ill-informed and extreme views reported in the media.

Note that in addition to notifying Retail Members about this article, CHC has sent a response via a letter to the Editor of the SMH which hopefully will be published on Saturday January 28th.

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For further information:

Dr. Tony Lewis, Executive Director, Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia

Email: tony.lewis@chc.org.au

Tel: +61 2 6260 4022 / Fax: +61 2 6260 4122 / Mobile: 0407 07 21 51

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Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia (CHC)
PO Box 104, Deakin West, ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6260 4022 | Fax: (02) 6260 4122 | www.chc.org.au