



440 1st St, N.W. , Ste. 520, Washington, D.C. 20001

(202) 223-0101, Fax (202) 223-0250

NPAinfo.org

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Justin Bartolomeo

(202) 789-4365

jbartolomeo@hdmk.org

New Legislation Would Provide Relief for 25 Million Americans Living in Food Deserts

NPA Leads Grassroots Push for WIC Expansion, Urging Members of Congress to Co-Sponsor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – New legislation introduced by Congressman Dave Brat (R-VA) would expand access to multivitamins and minerals for purchase as part of the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children (WIC). The effort led by the Natural Products Association could help provide relief to the 25 million Americans currently living in areas without access to fresh and nutritious foods.

“Why should you be able to buy Dora the Explorer cereal but not a Nature’s Way Children’s Chewable vitamin,” said Dan Fabricant, Ph.D., President and CEO of NPA. “Expanding WIC to include multivitamins would create an oasis for the 25 million Americans living in food deserts and make it easier for people to provide healthier lives for their families.”

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a food desert “as parts of the country void of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas.” As part of an effort to bring awareness to this growing problem, the USDA created an interactive map to show the areas most impacted, which can be viewed [here](#).

Since 1978, the WIC Supplemental Food Program has served low-income, at risk pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5. The WIC program provides Federal grants to States for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education. The program has grown significantly in its nearly 40-years of existence, and it now serves approximately 8 million participants.

The “WIC Improvement Act”, H.R. 3529, will expand WIC to give these low-income families equal opportunity for access to low-cost, high nutrient alternatives, like multivitamins and minerals. Multivitamins are proven to have the following health benefits especially relevant to those the WIC program intends to help:

- Classic nutrient deficiency diseases (scurvy, pellagra, and iron deficiency anemia)



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- Improve appetite and growth rates
- Prevent neural tube birth defects
- Protect against heart disease and stroke
- Build bone mass in the young

The Natural Products Association (NPA) recently launched a grassroots campaign calling for Congress to support multivitamins to be eligible in the WIC special supplemental nutrition program. By taking 30-seconds to visit our grassroots page, you have the power to tell your members of Congress the importance of multivitamins in countering nutritional deficiencies.

Go to www.saveoursupplements.org to write congress today to tell them to support H.R. 3529 for multivitamin dietary supplements to be eligible under WIC.

Natural Products Association

The **Natural Products Association (NPA)** is *the* trade association representing the entire natural products industry. We advocate for our members who supply, manufacture and sell natural ingredients or products for consumers. The Natural Products Association promotes good manufacturing practices as part of the growth and success of the industry. Founded in 1936, NPA represents over 1,400 members accounting for more than 10,000 locations of retailers, manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors of natural products, including foods, dietary supplements, and health/beauty aids. Visit www.NPAinfo.org. Follow NPA on social media:

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Natural Products Association: 440 1st Street, NW, Ste. 520, Washington, DC, 20001

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