



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

NPA Asks Congress to Support Access to Vitamins for Low-Income Families *FY'17 Appropriations Report Asks for Review of WIC Program to Include Multivitamins for Low-Income Mothers and Children*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Natural Products Association (NPA) commended the U.S. House today for urging the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to investigate expanding access to vitamins for low-income mothers and children. The provision, included in the [House Agriculture Committee's FY 2017 appropriations bill report](#), comes after a yearlong grassroots and advocacy effort spearheaded by NPA.

“If school cafeterias are allowed to serve things like french fries and pizza, we think it is reasonable to find a way for mothers and fathers to purchase items that can support their children’s health,” said Dan Fabricant, Ph.D., President and CEO of NPA. “Expanding WIC to cover supplements would mark a big win for low-income families, and we commend the House for taking this first step in pushing such a common-sense policy stance.”

“NPA’s grassroots network renewed its push this year to expand access to dietary supplements to all Americans, ensuring this crucial provision to start the process to help low-income families was included in the House appropriations bill,” added Dr. Fabricant. “As an industry we still have some work to do, but we are truly thrilled at starting this important discussion, to get it across the goal line we need everyone in the industry to write congress at www.saveoursupplements.org and tell them that we want to see expansion of WIC to include multivitamins.”

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.

According to a study published in the *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, children without access to proper nutrition are more likely to develop learning difficulties in the first two years of life. The inclusion of vitamins in the WIC program will help combat that issue, specifically for low-income women and children. Vitamins are proven to have many health benefits that are especially relevant to those individuals the WIC program intends to help. They can:

- Prevent classic nutrient deficiency diseases (scurvy, pellagra, and iron deficiency anemia);
- Improve appetite and growth rates in low-income children;



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- Prevent neural tube birth defects;
- Protect against heart disease and stroke; and
- Build bone mass in the young.

NPA will continue to work with Congress to define the parameters for the inclusion of multivitamins in the WIC program and in the Food Stamp/SNAP program, which will likely be addressed in the 2018 farm bill to ensure the maximum number of families access their benefits. For more information and to write congress go to www.saveoursupplements.org.

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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