

From the European Herbal and Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association (EHTPA) 10/03/2010

Overwhelming support of herbal practitioners in support of statutory regulation!

Despite some claims to the contrary, the vast majority of practitioners prescribing herbal medicines support statutory regulation.

The following are statements from the Presidents and Chairs of the Professional Associations of herbal practitioners that belong to the European Herbal and Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association (EHTPA). This shows overwhelming support of their members for statutory regulation.

From Jane Gray President National Institute of Medical Herbalists (NIMH)

The NIMH has been an active member of the EHTPA from its inception in 1993 and has consistently put issues to do with regulation to the vote of its membership at numerous AGM's. Voting has throughout been in favour of working with the EHTPA to investigate ways of implementing regulation. Members have had to pay a subscription and a personal levy to the EHTPA over most of these past years so that individual members have put their money where their mouth is. The NIMH Council has been very clear about its commitment to pursue Statutory Regulation for our profession. NIMH members have the opportunity each year to oppose this policy but NIMH membership has consistently voted in favour of a Council with a pro-regulatory policy. I gather that opponents of statutory regulation are citing our EGM in November 2008 that carried a vote for statutory regulation comprising around 28% of the NIMH membership but there are "lies, damned lies, and statistics"! Historically, that was one of the best attended EGM's NIMH has ever held which would argue a high degree of interest among membership and commitment from those that travelled to London to attend that day.

Those not in favour of regulation have in the main left the Institute and their group remains on the margins. As far as I know the anti-regulation group have no formal registered body, code of practice, complaints procedure, or any of the other necessary accoutrements to modern professional healthcare practice - this is hardly a satisfactory position.

Some of those anti regulation claim that the implementation of the Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive in April 2011 will make no difference to the supply of medicines to practitioners. However, the fact is that a very large number of our members will lose access to at least some of their medicines. I estimate that the impact on my own practice is that I will lose somewhere between 15-20% of my business. A good proportion of our members who carry no dispensary at all will lose access to everything except what is available over-the-counter- which is an extremely limited range of herbal medicines and

certainly not enough to address the needs of the full range of medical conditions that we see.

From Peter Conway President of the College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy (CPP)

The College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy took a vote on whether we were in favour of statutory regulation in 2004. All members were in favour of regulation, none voted against. The CPP membership continues to be completely behind statutory regulation - we have no dissenting members.

I am aware that a very small number of herbal practitioners outside of the CPP are strongly against statutory regulation. This is to be expected, especially as some may not welcome the increased standards that will come with statutory regulation. Additionally there will always be a few obsessive naysayers who are prepared to devote themselves to writing screeds of tracts of protest and shrilly asserting their world view. Some of these have managed to make a lot of noise and to initiate anti-regulation petitions which have been signed almost exclusively by non-herbalists. The presentation of such petitions is generally highly misleading and they are signed by members of the public who are confused and fear that they are going to lose access to herbs. It would be tragic if the noise made by a tiny number of anti-regulation herbalists were allowed to distract from the fact that the herbal profession in the UK is actually very strongly united in favour of statutory regulation.

From Liz Lyden, President Unified Register of Herbal Practitioners (URHP)

The URHP has 85 members all of whom support the move to statutory regulation. A minority who opposed statutory regulation for various reasons left the URHP in 2002 since when only one member has left the organisation because of opposition to the idea of state regulation.

From Emma Farrant General Secretary of the Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine

The RCHM has over 400 members. Every one of them is in favour of statutory regulation (SR) of herbal medicine in the UK. Indeed, our members voted in favour of the move towards SR at an Emergency General Meeting in 2001. They also voted in favour of payment of an individual levy over a number of years to fund this process, which indicates the strength of their feelings. Without SR many of our members will be unable to practise Chinese herbal medicine, thus depriving thousands of patients of the treatment they need. SR is the only way to protect and safeguard the public's interest.

From Sascha Kriese, Vice -President Ayurvedic Practitioners Association (APA)

All APA members are supportive of statutory regulation. The APA has been supportive of statutory regulation since its founding in 2005. I do not recall a single feedback from any of our members (be it by email, telephone or verbally during APA meetings), that would have questioned that position, let alone proposed a continuation of the current voluntary regulation instead.

From Peter Jackson-Main Chairman of the Association of Master Herbalists (AMH)

Members of the Association of Master Herbalists have been unreservedly in support of statutory regulation from 2000 when it was first mooted by the House of Lords' Select Committee on Science and Technology. All referenda carried out on this issue have been virtually unanimous, and although we have not conducted a referendum within the last two or three years, neither have we had to field any objections or dissent during recent years. Moreover, our membership has been stable throughout that time and no-one has left our organization stating as their reason any disagreement with AMH policy in pursuing SR.

From Dr Brion Sweeney Chair of the British Association of Traditional Tibetan Medicine (BATTM)

We are small organisation All our members are pro Statutory Regulation.

Notes

1. Numbers of members in each Professional Association (Pas) within the EHTPA all of which PAs are in support of statutory Regulation.

Association of Master Herbalists	78
Ayurvedic Practitioners Association	68
College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy	128
National Institute of Medical Herbalists	610
Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine	429
Unified Register of Herbal Practitioners	85
British Assoc of Traditional Tibetan Medicine	4
Total membership of professional Assocs	1402

2. The Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Is not a member of the EHTPA. It has some 700 members and is in full support of statutory regulation.

The notion of any widespread and significant professional opposition to the idea of statutory regulation is clearly misplaced.