

BACKGROUND of the CURRENT HEALTH CANADA SITUATION & the ALIGNMENT to NZ's THERAPEUTIC PRODUCTS & MEDICINES BILL

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Imagine that you have a son, daughter or spouse who starts to suffer from a mental illness such as depression or bipolar disorder.

The doctor puts them on drugs, which work for a while but then the symptoms return. Stronger and stronger drugs are provided, many of them causing severe side effects such as rapid weight gain, with diabetes, liver and kidney failure likely to appear over time.

Your loved one grows worse, eventually attempting suicide. The illness is destroying the family, and you have nowhere to turn.

Then someone tells you about a natural formula containing nutrients that is showing very promising results. You follow it up and your mentally ill loved one joins the program. Their symptoms gradually disappear, and they come off all of the other drugs. They are well again.

A year goes by and the mental illness seems like a bad dream. You hear that a University has started doing clinical trials on the nutritional formula which are going really well, showing an 80% success rate – an unheard of result. Many of the other drugs are released to market with a success rate of as little as 26%.

Then one day you go to re-order and find that the formula has been banned by Health Canada. You ring the supplier, they tell you that Health Canada has intervened and instructed the University to immediately halt the clinical trial. They also tell you that Health Canada has banned the formula because it had developed a reputation for benefiting a serious illness, and it did not have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). No DIN would be issued because the trial had not been completed.

Your loved ones supply runs out and they can't get any more.

You call a crisis line that has been set up by Health Canada. There is a recorded message which states: "You are mentally ill, the formula you were taking has been withdrawn for your own safety, go back to your doctor or psychiatrist and go back on the drugs that they prescribe. You may leave a message but it will not necessarily be responded to."

Your loved one starts to regress, all of the old symptoms return. They vow they are not going to endure all of the side effects of the drugs they were on before, which didn't work anyway. They say they would rather die.

You decide to drive 10 hours across the border to the US where the product is not banned, but it gets confiscated on the way back by Canadian Customs, who are under strict instructions to seize the formula. You break down in tears, you beg them to let you have it, but it's no use. You go home empty handed.

You call the head of the Canadian Mental Health Association. You describe your situation, and he asks what's in the formula. You read out all of the ingredients – they are nothing but vitamins and minerals, and he says he will try and help. He calls Health Canada and tries to intervene on your behalf. He tells them that your loved ones life is at risk without this product, can they make an exception and allow the confiscated product at the border to be released. The answer is no.

Your loved one does commit suicide out of despair, and there was nothing you could do to stop it. Later the suppliers are taken to court by Health Canada for ignoring their directive to stop selling the product. The verdict makes headlines.

The Judge rules in favour of the suppliers, granting them the defence of necessity. He said that if the directors had not ignored Health Canada's directives they would have been liable for criminal charges of withholding the necessities of life support. He labeled Health Canada's actions as 'vexatious'. During the trial it was also established that Health Canada considered all of the ingredients to pose minimal risk.

You also read that some of the people who called the crisis line were put through to a call centre, and that records were kept of the calls.

Health Canada refused to release these records, saying they were 'undiscoverable', until ordered to do so by the court.

This is some of what call centre operators wrote. In 730 pages of notes not a single caller notified the call centre of an adverse event with the supplement:

- *"I'd like to know what you're going to do about my possible suicide in a few weeks when I run out of the supplement".*
- *"I require the supplement to live"....Also feels as if a death sentence has been handed to her.*
- *Was severely suicidal before taking the supplement, and is now afraid for his life if the product is banned.*
- *Does not feel that she will be able to function without it.*
- *Caller is desperate and is pleading with me to tell the Minister to change her mind.*
- *She has 3 kids she has to take care of...if government stops this, it will be the end of her life. "It is a question of life or death and it is extremely serious".*
- *"Government can not stop this product because I will die".*
- *She is crying a lot and says it is the only product that will keep her alive.*
- *She states that this will destroy her life, she is pleading with the Minister (from a mother to a mother) crying and pleading, to please allow her to have access to the product.*
- *"Feel betrayed...turned my life around...Didn't know that it was some peoples mission to hurt people. Haven't slept for two days"...Client crying..."we don't need a crisis line, we need the supplement".*
- *"Please tell the Minister that she has to find a way because my daughter is going to kill herself".*
- *Child has rare disease, he is hugely improved. Desperate because by end of June his supply will run out. She does not want him to return to his previous level of functioning.*
- *She added that the title "Honorable" should not be associated with the Ministers name. She says she is no longer proud of her country, that this situation is inhumane and moronic....she wanted to know how I could sleep at night knowing about this.*
- *No other approach, including drugs and shock therapy has worked.*
- *I spent 2 full years in bed, and with this supplement I can now work and have an active life.*
- *Suicidal since age 8.... (now) pays taxes.....works for 1st time.*

Next, you find out that the Health Canada officials responsible for banning the product will not be prosecuted. They were just doing their job. Due to a change of government the New Minister of Health has provided a special dispensation for the product to be allowed to be imported for personal use. The clinical trials have started again, but the product remains banned by Health Canada.

A video of press gallery interviews of consumers who came to parliament to plead for help can be viewed at 'The red umbrellas' http://www.nzhealthtrust.co.nz/must_read.html. Parliament was powerless to intervene on their behalf, just as our politicians will be if the Therapeutic Products and Medicines Bill goes ahead. Truehope have recently obtained approval on the product in question under a different name, with only minor health claims attributed to it. It cost them \$100,000 Canadian to register this blend of Vitamins, minerals, and herbs. The identical formula with a reputation for benefiting mental illness remains banned by Health Canada to this day.