

# Government Relations Update for CANDJ

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As a national association, the CAND is mandated to represent and advocate for the naturopathic profession at the federal level with all Ministries, Directorates, and Departments. Over the past year we have made great strides on the profession's behalf getting coverage for naturopathic services for Veterans through Veterans Affairs Canada, continuing our participation on the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) Health and Allied Health Sector advisory table, and progressing, thanks to the support of the Chiefs of Ontario, towards coverage of naturopathic medicine for Indigenous Peoples under the Non-Insured Health Benefits program (NIHB). In April, the *Hill Times*, the preeminent publication read by all politicians in Ottawa, published our Op Ed on how naturopathic medicine continues to be an emerging answer to Canada's healthcare concerns.

Along with the accomplishments, the profession faced a significant challenge in May, when Health Canada announced its consultation on "Proposed Fees for Natural Health Products." The proposal, in response to a 2021 Auditor General's report on the Natural and Non-prescription Health Products Directorate (NNHPD), set out a number of proposed changes to the Natural Health Product regulations (NHPRs) to address the concerns outlined in the Auditor General's report and a cost recovery structure for NHPs based on the costing method used for drugs and medical devices. If implemented, the amendments and fees will cause significant price increases for NHPs and the loss of products and

companies from the Canadian market. All stakeholders involved in the NHP sector, including the CAND, launched coordinated campaigns in opposition to the proposal. Health Canada, the Health Minister's office, and Members of Parliament (MPs) for all parties were inundated with the concerns expressed by NDs, patients, and the public—expressed by letter, by phone call, and in face-to-face meetings. Our campaign garnered support from many MPs, who committed to take our concerns forward to Health Canada, the Health Minister, and their colleagues in Parliament. In a meeting with the CAND, Health Canada acknowledged the significant number of responses it had received. The consultation closed on August 10, 2023, and at time of writing, the CAND awaits Health Canada's report on its review of the input received and how it proposes to move forward.

The House of Commons adjourned in June, slated to return September 18, 2023. However, while MPs went back to their home ridings to spend the summer assisting constituents, the Prime Minister decided to shuffle his cabinet. The shuffle resulted in new Ministers in several key portfolios for the CAND—Health, Veterans and Indigenous Affairs. The process of developing relationships with the new Ministers and their staff has begun and we look forward to working with them in our advocacy efforts for the naturopathic profession.

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