

# Chong says product claims must be proven

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"For our industry that doesn't really work because we're not selling drugs," said Parkes.

He said he would like to see people "who are experts in herbal medicine and dietary supplements" to set the criteria to evaluate the products.

"It shouldn't be based on the drug model," he said.

"Science can't grasp the fundamentals behind herbal medicine, this is where the rub is," said DeSylva, who added he had heard Health Canada has hired several recent B.Sc. grads to evaluate the products.

Chong said there are hundreds of medical professionals, with medical degrees and PhDs working for Health Canada. He said the senior bureaucrats are not recent graduates of university and are world-renowned in their field.

"They are experts at chemical formulations and the impact these formulations have on human health," said Chong.

He said the first priority for the federal government is the safety of Canadians. He said Canadians have concerns about the safety of natural health products and the claims the industry was making are not scientifically evidence-based, so the government has put in a regulatory regime and enforcement of those regulations are supposed to begin in February or March 2011.

"You can't make a claim about a product unless you can prove that claim," said Chong.

"We are open for regulation," said Parkes.

"We just don't feel the government is listening to our concerns.

"We feel the way they (Health Canada) is evaluating, there are inconsistencies."

He said, for example, one of their prostate health products may receive the stamp of approval, while another similar product won't.

"We're trying to understand what their criteria is," said Parkes. He said they almost have to guess what Health Canada wants when reformulating a product.

Parkes, president of Preferred Nutrition, said about 10 of its 80-product line have not received the stamp of approval from Health Canada.

Chong assured those at the meeting the whole purpose of the regulations, which have been in the works for several years, "is not to ban natural health products or put you out of business."

He said he would be their voice in Ottawa to bring their concerns to Health Canada.

On their behalf, and on behalf of others in the industry he's met with, Chong said he would ask for a delay of the regulatory regime until Health Canada decides if it will make changes to the standards of evidence based on a request from the Natural Health Products Program Advisory Committee.

Also, he will ask for a delay because there is an unlevel playing field now between those who have received interim registration numbers for their products while they are being evaluated by Health Canada, and those who have already had their applications denied.

# ATHLETES of the week



**Acton High School** Athletes of the Week are Jacob Box and Eric Butson. Both are members of the Bearcats' golf team, and were chosen for their play over the season, playing in four tournaments in the Halton high school series.

**Georgetown District High School** Athletes of the Week are Claire Dickson and Jake MacNeil. Dickson, a member of the Rebels' cross country team, was chosen for qualifying for OSFAA after taking part in the junior girls' 4km run at Christie Park Conservation Area near Hamilton. MacNeil, a Grade 9 student who plays right side on the Rebels' senior volleyball team, was selected for his strong play in victories against White Oaks and rival Christ the King.

**Christ the King Catholic High School** Athletes of the Week are Tara Marchand and Victoria Debrincat. Marchand, a member of the Jaguars' dance group, was selected for her great dancing and her help, teaching some of the younger students, contributing to the program. Debrincat, a point guard on the Jaguars' junior basketball team, was honoured for her strong defensive play and 11 points against Notre Dame.

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