

Safeguard Your Right to Choose Herbal Medicine!

Hi, my name is Hilary Self, and I am one of the founders and a director of Hilton Herbs. I am also a Medical Herbalist, and a member of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists (**NIMH**), a 150 year old organisation that represents over 700 UK Herbalists. I run my own herbal practice at our premises in Somerset.

I am appealing to anyone who wants to be able to retain the option of consulting a herbalist and using herbal medicines in the future, so please take a few minutes to read on.

It is a bit long winded but basically these are the facts:

2000 - Government's own House of Lords report started the process of Statutory Regulation (SR) of herbal medicine in 2000.

2000 - A Steering group is set up to consult with the various groups involved and recommend on the Statutory Regulation (SR) of Herbalists, Acupuncturists and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Medical Herbalists want SR as a way for herbal medicine to be integrated into the national health care system, making it possible for GPs and Medical Herbalists to communicate and share professional responsibility for the health care of the general public.

June 2008 – The Steering Group Report is completed, with clear and very positive direction as to how and why herbalists should be regulated. Hurrah!!

June 2008 - Government hands report to another Dept of Health Steering group who are meant to review the documents and report back by November 2008!! They do not do this.

August 2009 –The second Dept of Health Steering Group decide they want to start a new consultation process which involves members of the public completing an on-line questionnaire. This questionnaire is complex and, before it can be sensibly completed, eight hefty government documents have to be read!!

The questionnaires, which can be sent by email, must be in by **November the 2nd**. Please see

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_103567

For a sample of suggested questionnaire responses please follow THE LINK to the NIMH website.

Your RIGHT to choose and use Herbs and Herbal Medicine is at risk!!

In 2011 [EU legislation](#) is due to be implemented in the UK which will prevent the sale of ANY 'finished' herbal products that don't have a licence. At present only 40 products hold a licence!

The effect of this new legislation could be that thousands of products will disappear overnight and would no longer be available to either Herbalists or members of the public. Products like

Calendula cream, Comfrey Cream, Thyme and Liquorice Syrup, and custom-made herbal capsules, would be regarded as 'finished' products and would, therefore, require licences. To obtain licences is prohibitively expensive and well beyond the budgets of herbal suppliers.

If herbalists do not get SR they run the risk of being denied access to many of their herbs, tinctures, creams, syrups, and capsules. It is vital that herbalists retain full access to all their herbs if they are to continue to care for their patients.

I am asking everyone who values their freedom of choice, and wishes to preserve their right to access this traditional form of medicine, to make their feelings known to both the Department of Health and their local MP. You can do this by downloading the following documents, personalising them, and sending copies to the Department of Health consultation team and your local MP.

If you don't know who your local MP is you can find this at: <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>

Sample letters are available on the NIMH website. www.NIMH.org.uk

In view of the postal strike it may be safer to email your local MP to ensure he gets your letter before the 2nd November.

Please help me ensure both current and future generations of UK citizens retain the right to use herbal medicines, as their forefathers have done for hundreds of years.

Thank you so much for your support in this important matter.

Hilary Self BSc MNIMH
Medical Herbalist
Director – Hilton Herbs