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NEWS RELEASE

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Medical Foods Could Play Larger Role in Chronic Pain Management & Opioid Crisis, Says NPA

Medical Foods Could Reduce Adverse Events and Merits Further Research by Government

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Utilizing medical foods for acute and chronic pain may reduce adverse events, said The Natural Products Association (NPA) today in comments to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Pain Management Task Force. NPA also called for more research on medical foods.

“As policymakers address the opioid crisis, we need to consider all available options for managing chronic pain,” said Daniel Fabricant, Ph.D., President and CEO of NPA. “Expanding access to medical foods is consistent with the Task Force’s calls for individualized, patient-centered pain management. More research and better policies on medical foods could improve the lives of millions of Americans. We look forward to working with the Department in the future and thank them for the opportunity to comment on this very important matter.”

Acetaminophen is associated with significant adverse events, and NSAID-related GI bleeding is responsible for 100,000 hospitalizations and 16,500 deaths per year. Because the risk of negative outcomes is so high in elderly patients, the American Geriatrics Society recommends that NSAIDs be restricted, or even eliminated in individuals older than 65 years of age. Adverse events associated with opioids include increased risk of falls, depression, sexual dysfunction, nausea, constipation, hormonal abnormalities, dependence, overdose, and death.

“Increasing prescription doses and adverse events from managing acute and chronic pain have created a need to develop safer therapies,” said Dr. Fabricant. “Medical foods and foods for special dietary use are two categories that are underutilized by physicians. Their claims are substantiated by competent and reliable scientific evidence and there is a labeling requirement that differentiates them from other food products. They must also be given under the supervision of a physician.”

NPA’s comments can be viewed [here](#).

Natural Products Association

The **Natural Products Association (NPA)** is *the* trade association representing the entire natural products industry. We advocate for our members who supply, manufacture and sell natural ingredients or products for consumers. The Natural Products Association promotes good manufacturing practices as part of the growth and success of the industry. Founded in 1936, NPA represents approximately 1,000 members accounting for more than 10,000 locations of retailers, manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors of natural products, including foods, dietary supplements and health/beauty aids. Visit www.npanational.org.