



**Save Our Herbs**

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE  
**OF MEDICAL  
HERBALISTS**

Save Our Herbs - Scotland Campaign

[www.saveourherbs.co.uk](http://www.saveourherbs.co.uk)

**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

**Herbalists and Supporters Rally to Save Our Herbs**

Public access to traditional herbal medicine is currently under threat. Medical Herbalists and supporters are mobilising to inform the public and Scottish Parliament. Changes in E.U. legislation that come into force in April 2011 will restrict suppliers of herbal medicine. It is more important now than ever before that Traditional Medical Herbalists gain statutory regulation following a Department of Health public consultation that ends 16<sup>th</sup> November. With regulation, the public will have access to the current wide range of herbs through herbal practitioners. Without regulation, herbalists will have no further rights to use most herbs than any other members of the public.

Medical Herbalist and event coordinator, Fiona Morris says, "The 'Save Our Herbs' Scotland and NIMH's Act Now Campaigns aim to give the public the opportunity to show their support for the continued use of herbal medicine in time to have an impact on the outcome of this consultation. We urge people to support the regulation of practitioners in this consultation and to respond to the government's request for comment."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.saveourherbs.co.uk> & <http://actnow.nimh.org.uk/> (Downloaded 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009)



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### Public Events

- **'A Celebration of Traditional Herbal Medicine' to Support the Future of Herbal Medicine. Saturday 7th November 2009, 1pm-4pm, Bristo Square, Edinburgh – Photo Opportunities**

Contact Fiona Morris – [saveherbs@gmail.com](mailto:saveherbs@gmail.com)

- **'Save Our Herbs' Mass Lobby. Tuesday 10th November 2009, 2pm-4pm, Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh – Photo Opportunities**

Contact Claire Mullan – [claire.mullan@gmail.com](mailto:claire.mullan@gmail.com)

- To find out more see website: [www.saveourherbs.co.uk](http://www.saveourherbs.co.uk)

### Background

The Herbal Medicinal Products Directive (THMPD)<sup>2</sup> was passed by the E.U. in 2005, requiring all herbal medicinal products to be licensed. Thousands of health-promoting plants are used in Herbal Medicine worldwide. However, currently very few finished medicinal herbal products are licensed. Up to date information on this can be obtained from the website of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)<sup>3</sup>. Licensing is prohibitively expensive, even if backed by private investment, business sponsorship, or government funding.

Under Article 5 (1) of THMPD, only 'authorised health professionals' will be allowed to prescribe herbal medicines. Traditional Medicine Practitioners are not recognised as 'authorised health professionals' because they are not statutorily regulated. Therefore, after

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<sup>2</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32004L0024:EN:NOT>

(downloaded 1st November 2009)

<sup>3</sup>

<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Publications/PublicAssessmentReports/PublicAssessmentReportsforherbalmedicines/index.htm> (downloaded 1st November 2009)



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April 2011, if the proposed changes are enforced, the majority of herbal products can no longer be ordered from third party suppliers.

Without a market, suppliers of herbal medicinal products, such as Scotland-based Napier's Herbalists and Woodland Herbs, and the UK-wide Neal's Yard Remedies, may experience serious difficulties. Prescribing herbalists will lose the benefits of herbal medicine quality, traceability, and the good manufacturing practice that herbal manufacturers currently provide, and will go out of business. Public access to most popular herbal medicine products will stop unless they can become licensed. It is therefore vital to the future of these practitioners, their patients, and users of herbal medicines that statutory regulation happens.

A Department of Health consultation to discuss statutory regulation for Herbalists, Traditional Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists ends on 16th November 2009<sup>4</sup>. The Department of Health will then consider whether or not to regulate traditional medicine practitioners. Professional Herbalists have been working with the UK government towards Statutory Regulation. The success of this process is in danger. This threatens the right of the public to access their choice of health care and will deny them the security and confidence provided by registered, fully qualified and accountable practitioners. The decision will affect the future of herbal medicine in the UK.

Herbalists are appealing for public support to gain regulation, protect their unrestricted access to herbal supplies, and defend the rights of the public to access the medical tradition of their choice.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH\\_103567](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_103567) (downloaded 1st November 2009)



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'Save Our Herbs' Scotland: <http://www.saveourherbs.co.uk>

National Institute of Medical Herbalists (NIMH) Act Now: <http://actnow.nimh.org.uk/>