Dear Fellow Canadian Herbalists,

Canadian practitioners of herbal medicine are finally united. History was made on February 19 & 20th 2005 when the Canadian Council of Herbalist Associations (CCHA) was officially formed in Vancouver BC.

Prior to the formation of the CCHA in February, the process was set in motion during meetings that took place in March, August, and November of 2004 in Calgary and Toronto. These preliminary meetings were attended by herbalists from across the country that agreed upon the need for a cohesive national voice for herbal practitioners. Dedicated time and effort was given during these meetings to sift through debates surrounding issues pertaining to our profession, Natural Health Products Directorate (NHPD) regulations, and the future of herbal medicine in Canada. The cumulative results of these meetings helped form the foundation of the CCHA.

The CCHA is a formation of Associations representing herbal practitioners. Organizations representing any region of Canada or herbal tradition are welcome to join the Council.

The CCHA serves as a forum for communication among member associations and representing member associations to other parties (groups/organizations). It is the role of the Council to develop a consensus position among member associations with regard to federal, provincial and territorial regulatory issues and to represent the consensus position to federal, provincial and territorial governments**.**

The Council is comprised of the following members:

President ~ 1 year term: Michael Vertolli Ontario Herbalists Association

Vice President West ~ 2 year term: Gillian Leverkus CHAofBC

Vice President East. ~ 3 year term: Valérie Lanctôt-Bédard Guilde des herboristes du Québec

Secretary/Treasurer (term undecided): Capucine Chartrand Guilde des herboristes du Québec

Directors at large:

Amanda Howe CHAofBC

Terry Willard Alberta

Annette Bossert)	Alberta
Savayda Jarone	Herbalist Association of Nova Scotia
Danette Steele	Herbalist Association of Nova Scotia
Rick DeSylva	Ontario Herbalists Association
Flo Lavallie	Saskatchewan Consultant Herbalist Association Inc.

Each member association may have up to two voting members present at all council meetings. Additional attendees will be considered observers and will not have voting authority.

Member associations that wish to be represented by the CCHA must have standards of practice and grievance procedures such as:

- Code of Ethics
- Code of Practice
- Scope of Practice
- Educational Standards
- Disciplinary Procedures

It is the responsibility of each member association to define and implement specific parameters for their association. This includes but is not exclusive to the requirements listed above. Newly formed herbalist associations may use the CCHA as a resource when creating these parameters. Council expects that all member associations meet these requirements by June 1, 2006.

The CCHA respects the definition of an herbal practitioner (and their qualifications) as determined by each member association, likewise, member associations support the definition of an herbal practitioner as defined by the Council. Council formed the following definition of an herbal practitioner with consideration given to the inclusion of

herbal practitioners from different traditions and avenues of learning, whether academic, apprenticeship or otherwise.

An herbal practitioner is an individual trained in the practice of herbal medicine who:

- is trained in the therapeutic use of crude botanical medicines; and
- primarily uses traditional preparations* of crude botanical material; and
- is qualified** and competent to take this responsibility and be held accountable for their recommendations.

* Traditional preparations include, but are not limited to: tinctures, teas, capsules, infusions, decoctions, syrups, plasters, poultices, oils, liniments, ointments, fomentations, salves, etc.

** Appropriate qualification could include formal training, self-study, apprenticeship model and others.

The primary task of the CCHA at this time is to act as an advisory body to the NHPD, and to be pro-active in response to regulatory issues set forth by them. According to current regulations, "natural health practitioners" are exempt from manufacturing laws when compounding remedies for clients based on professional consultation. The definition of "natural health practitioner" will be coming under review by the NHPD in the near future. We need to ensure that herbal practitioners are officially recognized and included in this definition. Secondly, we need to protect and preserve our right to process and compound herbal remedies for our clients, which is one of the key defining features of our profession. Gillian Leverkus and Michael Vertolli have been nominated to make an official presentation to the federal government announcing the formation of the CCHA and our position regarding these issues. Both are already well known by the NHPD and have valuable history and experience in dealing with them.

In addition to its involvement with standards and regulatory issues, the CCHA will take an active role in promoting the practice of herbal medicine, and herbalism in general, to Canadians. Potential avenues for doing so could include, collaboration with the Canadian Journal of Herbal Medicine, developing links with the media, and the coordination of national herbal events.

The next CCHA meeting will take place in Halifax, NS on July 21 & 22nd 2005.

The CCHA is calling for the support of all members of its member associations, practitioners and otherwise, during these precarious times. We face the very real threat of losing the practice of herbal medicine in Canada; we also have great potential to firmly root ourselves in the soil of health care in this country.

Sincerely,

Savayda Jarone

On behalf of the CCHA