

## SECOND 'MICRONUTRIENTS AND HEALTH' APPG MEETING POINTS TO TEENAGE NUTRITION AS A SERIOUS PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

On 13<sup>th</sup> September) the 'Micronutrients and Health' All Party Parliamentary Group, the Secretariat for which is managed by the Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA), held its second meeting in the House of Commons.

The meeting focussed on '*Improving teenage nutrition: new research and future policy*', and Carolyn Harris, Labour MP for Swansea East, who chaired this session on behalf of Rosie Cooper MP, praised the HFMA's efforts in promoting training and education and the highest quality standards of products and services.

The group, which is Chaired by Rosie Cooper MP, aims to promote awareness and understanding, and to help form strategies in Parliament, of the vital role of micronutrients in helping people to be healthier, and is supported by MPs including Sir David Amess, Gavin Robinson, Derek Thomas and Dawn Butler.

Discussions were led by Yvonne Bishop-Weston Bsc Dip ION mBANT CNHC, one of the UK's leading nutritional therapists, who discussed the state of child and teen nutrition currently in the UK, referencing the most recent NDNS data, published this month, which showed that **only 8%** of those aged 11-18 were currently achieving 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

Dr Jonathan Tammam PhD RD RNutr, Programme Leader & Principal Lecturer on Nutrition and Dietetics at the School of Life and Medical Sciences, at the University of Hertfordshire also presented findings from a study he had carried out at the Robert Clack School which showed that teen behaviour **significantly improved** when diets were supplemented with specific micronutrients and Omega 3 fish oils.

Both explained that teenagers had the **worst diets** amongst all age groups, making them a clear 'at-risk' group in nutritional terms. The experts agreed that lack of practical nutritional education, combined with social media pressure and the increased availability of fast foods meant that a strategy needed to be developed, starting in early years, to combat this collection of nutritional dangers. And they further agreed that supplementation could have a key role to play for this group.

Following the presentations and subsequent discussion amongst the group, which included several noted academics in the field of human nutrition, Carolyn Harris said that she would recommend to Rosie Cooper, as the group's Chair, that she might seek a Ministerial meeting to introduce the work of the APPG and report the findings of the latest meeting.

The group will also be asking for the Government's support for a campaign for production of better nutritional education materials for schools, and the HFMA agreed to consider a position statement on teenage health which asks a wide range of health stakeholders and authority groups to sign up, raising awareness on the issue of teenage nutrition.

HFMA Chair, Robert Taylor, said: "*This has been another very successful meeting and I am highly encouraged to see the issue of teenage nutrition, which is of profound importance but so often neglected, is being addressed by this group. We have some very worthwhile and important action steps to now move forward with.*"

The APPG group on Micronutrients for Health will meet four times a year to discuss key nutrition considerations, and aims to lobby effectively for better targeted guidance on nutrient intakes, by engaging with UK Department of Health and other stakeholders.

For more information on the All Party Parliamentary Group for Micronutrients and Health please contact [appg@hfma.co.uk](mailto:appg@hfma.co.uk)

ENDS



*Pictured: L to R (front) Dr Jonathan Tammam PhD RD RNutr, Yvonne Bishop-Weston Bsc Dip ION mBANT CNHC, and (back) Dawn Butler MP, Carolyn Harris MP*

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#### The HFMA

The Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) is the voice of the UK's natural health industry and represents more than 125 manufacturers and suppliers of natural health products.

Founded in 1965, the HFMA is a not-for-profit organisation which operates long-standing codes of practice to ensure that member companies adhere to high standards and offer good quality, safe products supported by responsible, lawful information.

For further information about the HFMA, visit [www.hfma.co.uk](http://www.hfma.co.uk).