



440 1<sup>st</sup> St. NW, Ste. 520, Washington, D.C. 20001  
(202) 223-0101, Fax (202) 223-0250

## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Justin Bartolomeo  
(202) 789-4365  
[jbartolomeo@hdmk.org](mailto:jbartolomeo@hdmk.org)

# Leading Retailers to Institute Certification Program for Supplements to Ensure Consumer Confidence

## *SSCI Opens 30 Day Public Comment Period for its new benchmarking guidance documents*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The world’s leading nutritional supplement retailers, including Walmart and GNC, expect nutritional supplements sold in their stores or on their websites to meet new guidelines set by the Supplement Safety and Compliance Initiative (SSCI). The new general and technical benchmarking guidance documents were released today during a meeting at Walmart’s headquarters in Bentonville, AR. SSCI is opening up a 30-day public comment period on these general and technical benchmarking guidance documents. Comments should be submitted to [info@ssciglobal.org](mailto:info@ssciglobal.org) no later than May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

“Manufacturing practices vary widely across the dietary supplement industry. Although all of our private label-aka store brand-suppliers must have a third-party audit and certification, SSCI will ensure they meet our stringent expectations and recognized benchmarking guidance documents through the supply chain,” said Dadrion Gaston R.Ph, Senior Director, Corporate Ethics & Compliance, Walmart. “SSCI brings together the best experts from the leading supplement companies to examine everything from auditor training, qualification, and the way audits are conducted. We look forward to having additional retailers and others in the industry join our mission to enhance the safety of dietary supplements and promote quality and safety for consumers everywhere.”

Dietary supplement manufacturers must comply with good manufacturing practices established by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and often rely on third-party auditors to help them verify and comply with those standards. SSCI plays a role in establishing a minimum set of requirements for all certifying bodies and certification program owners with the ultimate goal of harmonization with global requirements for supplements.

“SSCI is the only comprehensive program to provide end-to-end transparency in the natural products supply chain,” said Daniel Fabricant, PhD., President and CEO of NPA. “We created a system understanding that the FDA can’t solve all our problems. We set out to demonstrate to consumers and regulators that they can have confidence in the industry, and SSCI is the way we are going to achieve that.”

“Our new benchmarking guidance documents will unify and promote supply chain quality and provide a unique stakeholder platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and networking. We are proud of our commitment to increase transparency and safety in the dietary supplement and natural product industry,” said Guru Ramanathan, Ph.D., Chief Innovation Officer & Senior Vice President for GNC.



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“We received tremendous feedback on our new benchmarking guidance, and we are excited to join the leading supplement retailers in the world on this project,” said Mark LeDoux, SSCI Board Member. “Our Benchmarking guidance documents for finished products were developed from a broad range of input from manufacturers, retailers, and a national accreditation board, and we are happy to say the results have been excellent.”

“SSCI is the most ambitious program ever launched in the supplement industry to encourage collaboration between retailers, manufacturers, certifying bodies, and academia,” said Nora Dowell, VP, Corporate Quality Management and Regulatory Affairs, CQA, CQM/OE, SSGB, PCQI, International Vitamin Corporation. “This is a necessary step toward global harmonization of requirements for dietary supplements.”

### **Key Objectives for SSCI**

- Create effective global systems to ensure traceability, transparency & quality in the supply chain
- Reduce risks by ensuring equivalence between safety management systems
- Drive global change through benchmarking of domestic & international standards
- Eliminate redundancy in certification, improve operational efficiency & costs
- Provide a unique stakeholder platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing & networking

### **Supplement Safety & Compliance Initiative (SSCI)**

The **Supplement Safety & Compliance Initiative (SSCI)** is an industry-driven initiative *led by retailers* to provide a harmonized benchmark to recognize various safety standards throughout the entire dietary supplement supply chain. SSCI is a bold step forward in providing quality assurance from harvest to retailer shelf. Dietary supplements must meet or exceed the SSCI benchmark to be accepted in major retailers, all with the goal of providing quality products and increasing consumer confidence.

SSCI Vision: Safe and authentic dietary supplements for consumers everywhere.

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