

CRN PRESIDENT & CEO STEVE MISTER:

Top Dietary Supplement and Functional Food Issues of 2025 and 2026 Outlook

2025: A Year of Alignment and Accountability

CRN President & CEO Steve Mister described 2025 as a year of recalibration, alignment, and increased accountability for the dietary supplement industry in an article for *Nutraceuticals World's 2026 State of the Supplement Industry* review.

Mister explained that while the new administration's MAHA agenda initially sparked optimism around preventive health and nutrition, the past year demonstrated that progress would be more incremental than transformative. Rather than a sweeping shift, 2025 became a period of adjusting expectations—aligning industry priorities with evolving policy realities while reinforcing the supplement sector's long-standing commitment to proactive wellness.

Throughout the year, CRN worked to redirect policy conversations toward nutrient adequacy and access. Mister noted that early MAHA discussions often focused on what to remove from the diet, occasionally sweeping supplements into broader debates about ultra-processed foods and self-GRAS oversight. CRN successfully intervened at the state level to remove supplements from proposed legislation in Texas and Louisiana, defend ingredients such as melatonin and titanium dioxide, and refocus attention on the role supplements play in closing persistent nutrient gaps.

At the federal level, CRN found common ground with policymakers on nutrition education and dietary guidance. Mister highlighted engagement with HHS and USDA to encourage recognition of supplements as a regulated, evidence-based tool to support nutrient sufficiency, as well as growing momentum behind efforts to allow dietary supplements to qualify as eligible expenses under FSAs and HSAs. That effort gained traction through a CRN-commissioned economic analysis and increasing bipartisan interest.

Mister's article also detailed CRN's work to protect consumer access while advancing responsible oversight. He described efforts to push back against proposed age restrictions for weight management and sports nutrition products, and to refine California's prenatal heavy metals testing law into a more practical, consumer-focused policy.

Continued on back.



Link through to the full articles and more via CRN's website.

Is 2026 the Year Supplements Finally Get Their Due?

At CRN we see a real opportunity with momentum shifting in Washington to advance meaningful change—commonsense policies like dietary supplement listing in an FDA registry, a fairer framework for innovation through clarifying the drug preclusion provision, smarter FDA oversight and a coherent national regulatory approach, as well as broad FSA/HSA eligibility for supplements.

Read more from CRN President & CEO Steve Mister in Whole Foods Magazine.

"...course corrections in Washington rarely happen overnight. While some have grown impatient with the pace of change, we are focused on what comes next..."



continued, Mister Nutraceuticals World article summary

He emphasized that CRN continues to support improvements to transparency and accountability in the self-GRAS system—without dismantling a framework that enables innovation and access.

Mister pointed to CRN's "Responsible. It's Our Middle Name." campaign as evidence of the industry's commitment to proactive self-regulation. New voluntary guidelines for melatonin labeling and online product disclosures took effect in 2025, with additional work under way on turmeric. Through the CRN Foundation's Access Initiative, member companies also expanded nutrition education and outreach to underserved communities, reinforcing the industry's public health mission.

Looking ahead to 2026, Mister acknowledges that debate and scrutiny will continue—from FDA reform and GRAS accountability to ingredient transparency and media attention. His outlook remains confident, positioning the supplement industry as an essential partner in the nation's shift toward preventive health, building on the work done in 2025 that strengthened credibility through balance—between innovation and regulation, ambition and accountability.

Welcoming the Age of MAHA with Persistence, Patience and Pragmatism

CRN President & CEO Steve Mister reflected on a year of change and challenge for the dietary supplement industry and shared why patience, persistence, and pragmatism guided CRN's work throughout 2025, in a recent article published by NutraIngredients-USA.

Mister noted that the year began with optimism as the new administration introduced its Making America Healthy Again (MAHA) agenda. Many expected preventive health and nutrition to take center stage early. While progress did not come as quickly as anticipated, CRN's steady engagement with the administration began to pay off. Policymakers were increasingly acknowledging the widespread gaps in nutrient intake across the population and recognizing the important role dietary supplements played in supporting public health.

One of the clearest signs of progress was growing support for allowing dietary supplements to qualify as eligible expenses under FSAs and HSAs. Mister called this one of the most meaningful opportunities to improve affordability and access for consumers. Interest in this policy continued to build among both lawmakers and agency officials.

Mister also addressed ongoing challenges at the state level. He acknowledged the recent setback in New York as the age-restriction law moved forward during litigation. He reinforced that CRN would continue pushing back where policies were based on assumptions rather than science. He contrasted that experience with work in California, where collaboration helped refine a prenatal heavy metal testing bill into a more practical and consumer-focused policy.

Drug preclusion also resurfaced as a major concern this year. After a long wait for the FDA's response to CRN's 2023 citizen petition, the agency allowed one ingredient, NMN, to return to the market but did not address the broader problem. Mister explained that CRN would now pursue a legislative solution establishing clarity, a level playing field, and an environment that supported innovation. Hurdles notwithstanding, Mister's message was one of guarded optimism. He described 2025 not as a year of stalled progress, but as a year of laying the foundation. With stronger policy alignment emerging and preventive health gaining national attention, he noted the industry is well positioned heading into 2026.



**Link through to the full articles and more
via CRN's website.**

www.crnusa.org