



# News Release

Attorney General Robert E. Cooper, Jr.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **TENNESSEE ATTORNEY GENERAL ANNOUNCES \$25 MILLION MULTISTATE AGREEMENT FOR VITAMINS PRICE-FIXING CONSPIRACY**

Attorney General Bob Cooper has announced a \$25 million multistate agreement resolving allegations some companies fixed the price of certain vitamins in violation of federal and state antitrust laws. It has not yet been determined how much each state including Tennessee will receive.

The agreement, subject to court approval, is the second to be filed on behalf of consumers and businesses that purchased certain vitamins between 1988 and 2000 and reside in Tennessee or any other of the 22 settling states. In 2000, Tennessee and several other states reached a \$225 million agreement involving the same vitamins but different manufacturers.

"Many competing vitamin manufacturers agreed to fix the prices of vitamins they sold, which artificially raised the prices of vitamins for consumers," Attorney General Bob Cooper said. "This Office is committed to stopping any kind of activity which causes Tennesseans to pay higher prices than necessary, especially when it involves their health."

The vitamins affected by this alleged price fixing conspiracy are: vitamin A, astaxanthin, vitamin B1 (thiamin), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B3 (niacin), vitamin B4 (choline chloride), vitamin B5 (calpan), vitamin B6, vitamin B9 (folic acid), vitamin B12 (cyanocobalamine pharma), beta-carotene, vitamin C, canthaxanthin, vitamin E, and vitamin H (biotin) as well as all blends and forms of these vitamins. Also included is Premix, a product that contains one or more these vitamins in combination with other substances.

The companies named in the agreement include: Akzo Nobel Inc.; Bioproducts Incorporated, Mitsui & Co., Ltd. and Mitsui & Co. (U.S.A.), Inc.; Chinook Global Limited and Chinook Group, Inc.; Evonik Degussa GmbH, successor to Degussa AG, and Evonik Degussa Corporation; Lonza AG; Merck KGaA, E. Merck and EM Industries, Inc.; Nepera, Inc.; Sumitomo Chemical America, Inc. and Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd.; Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma Corporation and Tanabe U.S.A., Inc.; UCB Pharma, Inc.; and Vertellus Specialties Inc. and Vertellus Chemicals SA.

Tennessee and the other states secured this agreement in conjunction with a class action lawsuit pending in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

How much the states receive will be determined after court approval.