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It's one man's dream to protect his family from mental illness. Ten years later, it's a David vs. Goliath legal battle involving two small-town Alberta entrepreneurs and Health Canada.

It was January 30th of 1994 when **Tony Stephan** of Magrath, Alberta suffered a life changing loss. His young wife, only 40 years old committed suicide after a lengthy battle with bipolar disorder, a common mental illness affecting hundreds of thousands of Canadians. After losing his wife, Stephan was determined not to lose his son and daughter who had also been diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

After discussing his fears with a local agricultural specialist, **David Hardy**, Stephan was shocked to learn about the nutritional impact on a common behavioural problem affecting pigs called ear and tail biting syndrome as identified by agricultural science. After developing a nutritional supplement protocol for both his son and daughter, the 2 children had virtually no symptoms of bipolar and Tony Stephan and David Hardy were determined to share their story.

After introducing this discovery to a skeptical Bonnie Kaplan, the Director of the Behavioural Research Unit at the University of Calgary, she agreed to launch a clinical trial of Stephan and Hardy's nutrient supplement protocol. Shocked by her findings, Dr. Kaplan presented a detailed report to the Canadian Psychiatric Association's annual general meeting entitled "Successful Treatment of Bipolar Disorder with a Nutritional Supplement: 10 Cases." It was shortly there after that Stephan and Hardy's peace of mind fell apart in a nearly 5-year legal battle with Health Canada.

Upon seeing Doctor Kaplan's report on the nutritional treatment of bipolar on CTV National news on October 4th of 2000, Health Canada officials contacted the University of Calgary within days, demanding that all testing and trials be stopped. Health Canada was determined to make this discovery go away by shutting down an Alberta government approved and funded study.

On March 13th, 2006, a noted expert in legal matters surrounding nutritional supplements - **Kamloops, B.C. lawyer Shawn Buckley**, will defend his clients - Truehope Nutritional Support Ltd. and the Synergy Group of Canada Inc. against a charge of violating Health Canada regulations for marketing their nutrient supplement protocol to bipolar patients without a DIN number. A trial is scheduled for three weeks at the Alberta Provincial Court in Calgary.

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In 2003, Health Canada seized personal shipments of vitamins and minerals and destroyed them because people with mental illness were using them instead of drugs for treatment. Under the Food and Drugs Act no natural therapy could be used for their illness, so the vitamin and mineral combination called EMPowerplus became an illegal drug.

Supplies dwindled and EMPowerplus users panicked. Hundreds of letters and phone calls to government were ignored. A mental health crisis line was scripted to tell healthy people to go back to using drug treatments and hospitalization instead of the vitamins and minerals.

Desperate, nine women and one small boy went to Ottawa. For two days, they stood outside telling of their plight. The story was exposed, access was restored, and in October, 2003, Members of Parliament wearing Red Umbrella pins voted for Bill C-420 saying that the Food and Drugs Act must be rewritten to allow freedom of choice in health for all Canadians.

The law has yet to change.

The Red Umbrella stands for our desire for freedom to choose health in Canada.

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