

SHORT SHELF LIFE ITEMS

Together with DOD we are developing a standard system for the identification of material inherently subject to accelerated deterioration—commonly called short shelf life items—and prescribing the frequency of inspection to determine the remaining useful life of the items. I believe Senator Douglas last year called them perishable items.

Shelf life item codes for all items in the GSA stores stock program were updated in May 1966, and a GSA regulation requiring other civilian executive agencies to use this coding system to manage short shelf life items will be fully implemented by the end of fiscal year 1968.

PLAN TO USE MEDICAL STOCKPILE

With respect to the specific problem of short shelf life items in the civil defense medical stockpile, an interagency committee composed of representatives of GSA, DOD, PHS, and VA, has developed a plan to assure utilization of stockpile materials prior to expiration of their shelf life. The plan under consideration contemplates continual rotation of short shelf life items through the use of medical stockpile materials to meet current Federal needs, and replenishment of the stockpile with newly acquired materials. This plan is in the process of final clearance within the agencies represented on the committee. Pending adoption, short shelf life medical items are being utilized under interim arrangements between DOD, VA, and PHS.

Under the present civil defense medical stockpile program, 750 items of material valued at about \$176 million were in inventory as of February 1967, at 2,256 prepositioned hospitals (approximately \$64 million); 11 manufacturers' sites (approximately \$4 million); and 13 PHS/GSA emergency depots (approximately \$108 million).

Retention of inventories at the 11 manufacturers' sites has been discontinued and the materials declared excess during April of this year are available for use by DSA and VA.

PHS has reported, with respect to the \$176 million inventory, that materials valued at approximately \$9 million were utilized by VA and DOD from July 1 to December 31, 1966; materials valued at \$24.6 million were destroyed between June 1964, and April 1967, due to expiration of the shelf life or obsolescence; and 186 items valued at \$42.5 million will be subject to rotation by December 1968. A word about the \$24 million destroyed, \$11.9 million of that amount was intravenous solutions, \$3.3 million consisted of barbiturates and antibiotics accounted for another \$3.2 million.

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE

The interagency committee mentioned earlier also is working toward standardization of new items entering the stockpile programs so that, to the maximum extent possible, new procurements by PHS will utilize purchase descriptions based on military specifications so as to increase utilization by DOD, the largest user of medical items.

To reduce stockpile losses due to expiration of shelf life and obsolescence, the task force on emergency health preparedness, under the