When the results of the UGDP study were issued in 1970, we became concerned with our use of the oral hypoglycemic agents. We urged the physicians who cared for patients with diabetes in the clinic and hospital to pay heed to the results of the above study and to re-evaluate their treatment of the maturity onset group of patients. In an attempt to learn the extent of the use of oral hypoglycemic agents and their cost, the amounts of these medications dispensed by our staff were recorded from 1968 to early 1972 (See Table I). Review of these data disclosed an alarming increase in the use of these agents from 1968 through 1970. Response to the recommendations of the UGDP study was reflected by a modest decrease in the use of the oral agents during 1971 and 1972. Because we believed that the use of these agents was still excessive, the following letter was dispatched to the Pharmacy Committee of the hospital early in 1973.

May 24, 1973

Emanuel Wolinsky, M.D.
Chairman of the Pharmacy Committee

Dear Doctor Wolinsky:

The results of the University Group Diabetes Program (UGDP) (Diabetes, 19, Supplement 2, 747-830, 1970) allows one to develop the following conclusions concerning the safety and effectiveness of the oral hypoglycemic drugs, specifically the sulonylurea group (Tolbutamide and Chlorpropamide). (1) In the group treated with Tolbutamide there was a significant increase in deaths from cardiovascular disease, as compared with those treated with either insulin or strict adherence to a calculated diet. (2) That Tolbutamide was not as effective as either insulin or strict adherence to an isocaloric diet in the control of levels of blood sugar.

The UGDP study subsequently reported comparable results with the use of Phenformin (J.A.M.A., 217, #6, 777-784, 1971).

It is only fair to point out that there are skeptics who do not accept the results of the above study.