

One example is that of radio broadcasts. The physicians radio network, PRN, broadcasts the latest news of medicine to physicians 24 hours a day. I will demonstrate a PRN radio portion of one of these broadcasts in a moment, but I would point out that the radios themselves and the programing on them are financed entirely by the sale of advertising time to pharmaceutical manufacturers. Each 60 minutes of programing contains 8 minutes of advertising for brand-name drugs. Routine listing to PRN is approved for category 5A continuing medical education credit by the American Medical Association.

We can turn on the radio right now, I do not know what is going to come out. This broadcast goes on 24 hours a day.

[At which time a radio broadcast was heard.]

Senator NELSON. You didn't plan it that way?

This is a letter to physicians from Thomas Bird, director of broadcast services of the Physicians Radio Network. He stated that the services called the Physicians Radio Network, is now broadcasting in Chicago, providing 24 hours, 7 day a week coverage, broadcasting political, socioeconomic news about the practice of medicine. The broadcasts are heard only by those who have a special PRN radio. The radio and all programing are free, supported entirely by pharmaceutical advertising. "You need only fill out and return the enclosed form and your radio will be shipped without charge. The instrument is compact, attractive and fits nicely on your bookshelf" and so forth and so on.

This letter will be printed in the appropriate place in the record.¹

Dr. CROUT. Visual Information Systems also produce the network of continuing medical education, a biweekly, hour-long video tape distributed to hospitals, courtesy of Roche Laboratories, division of Hoffmann-LaRoche, Inc.

Nearly every major pharmaceutical company is engaged in producing materials for continuing education. These materials commonly use formats one associates with disinterested educational efforts—as expert panels and lectures by distinguished physicians. Despite their appearance, and despite the fact that they may be generally accurate, they are often promotional of particular drugs or drug classes and, on the whole, are one-sided. One does not often find in these materials the sort of healthy skepticism of a particular therapy that a journal like the "Medical Letter" brings to its readers. Typically, one does not see on such panels those physicians who believe oral hypoglycemic agents are dangerous, who believe anti-anxiety agents and sedatives are overprescribed.

I want to illustrate the kind of examples I am talking about. The first example is a video tape on depression. This is the longest tape, it will run about 10 minutes, but I think you will get a flavor of what we are talking about, recognizing this as an educational tape sponsored by the American Psychiatric Association, financed by Pfizer Pharmaceuticals. The program is made available to groups of physicians by Pfizer detail men. Some segments of the program will demonstrate that the tape, while probably reflecting the participants' views fairly, strongly encourages use of antidepressants generally and to some degree Pfizer's product Sinequan specifically.

¹ See letter dated December 30, 1975, from Thomas F. Bird, director, broadcast services, Physicians Radio Network, page 14034.