

Mr. Chairman:

I am delighted to appear today to discuss at your invitation the relationship between the pharmaceutical industry and medical education. This is an important topic and a timely one. There is considerable evidence that the pharmaceutical industry plays a very important, perhaps a dominant, role in the post-graduate education of physicians, dentists, and other health professionals. This role of the pharmaceutical industry in supporting post-graduate medical education has increased rapidly in recent years and, in my opinion, is a problem deserving of national attention.

Let me emphasize from the start that I do not consider this issue to be primarily a problem in drug regulation. While I will draw upon the experience of the Bureau of Drugs in citing a number of examples in this testimony, my remarks will also reflect views developed during two decades of personal experience as a student and a teacher of medicine before coming to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

I testify today as a concerned physician who believes that the growing influence of the pharmaceutical industry on medical education is a long-term threat to the integrity of my chosen profession.

THE PROCESS OF MEDICAL EDUCATION

Before considering the many ways in which the pharmaceutical industry is involved with the education of physicians, I would like to comment briefly on trends in medical education since the turn of the century.