

DRUG INDUSTRY'S ROLE IN POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION

It thus is not surprising that the drug industry is vitally interested in the educational materials the practicing physician receives. In view of the great financial resources available to the industry it should also not be surprising that it has come to support a large and growing proportion of such educational materials.

It has long been recognized that the industry-supported detailman is an important and influential source of information on drugs for the practicing physician. Drug labeling and drug advertising, which are closely regulated by FDA, also provide information. It is less well recognized, however, that much of the written and audio-visual teaching material supplied to the physician on all medical subjects throughout his professional career is also supported by the pharmaceutical industry. This includes the vast majority of medical magazines which fill his mailbox, the clinical symposia that discuss specific drugs or general approaches to therapeutics, the audio-visual teaching systems he studies in his spare time, the films and closed circuit TV tapes he sees in his hospital conferences, and even the scientific exhibits and presentations by panels of experts he encounters at medical meetings. This extensive underwriting of post-graduate medical education and communication by the drug industry has occurred primarily in the past decade, and is the problem I want to emphasize in this testimony.