

14070 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

Let me note that while the drug industry has a natural interest in the post-graduate education of physicians, it is not alone in fostering this trend. Pharmaceutical industry financing of such endeavors has been encouraged by medical institutions eager for attractive teaching materials, by respected investigators and clinicians eager to make their work and opinions more widely known, by practicing physicians under increasing pressure to participate in formal training to maintain licensure, and by medical societies facing growing demands to make such training available. These groups are well aware of the vast resources the industry has at its disposal, particularly in comparison with medical institutions and medical societies. Make no mistake, modern educational materials are costly. There has been a growing sophistication in the techniques used to educate people, and the "old" methods--lectures, review articles, textbooks--are perceived by some as dull and tedious. Instead we now have "learning systems" generally involving films or videotapes accompanied by elaborate graphics and self-instruction materials. It may well be true that these newer kinds of materials can be prepared only with special subsidies (assuming their added value as educational instruments is worth the extra money).

There is a cost involved, however, in giving substantial control over that subsidy to the drug industry. That cost is the introduction of systematic bias. Without contending that industry-supported