

Gordon Richards, RPh, of Shawnee, told PRIVATE PRACTICE: "I tell my customers that they've got to remember that today's medications are more powerful than they used to be. So while individual tablets or capsules may cost more, it takes fewer to treat them. Because of this, the average dosage price has gone down, not up, since 1960."

PHARMACISTS ALSO OPPOSED TO SUBSTITUTION

The American Pharmaceutical Association has been pushing hard for substitution since 1970, even though it was instrumental in getting anti-substitution laws passed in the early 1950s. Because of the APhA, many think that all pharmacists want substitution. But ethical pharmacists do not, and the Pottawatomie and Pontotoc County Pharmacists Associations joined their medical colleagues in fighting it. Adds pharmacist Richards: "Drug substitution is bad for the prescriber, for the pharmacist, and, most of all, for the patient. I am completely opposed to it." The pharmacist's scientific training makes him realize all the factors that can make chemically equal drugs act differently in the body. "In my day-to-day dispensing, I have seen the unsatisfactory results of one drug, as compared to a similar drug, in the experience of my customers," said another pharmacist.

"Drug substitution severs the lines of communication between the pharmacist and physician," said Mr. Richards. "It eliminates the 'teamwork' from the health-care team by taking the physician out of the final choice of the drug to be used. When the pharmacist and physician work independently rather than together it is the patient who suffers most. It is in the best interest of the patient for the pharmacist to consult the physician before making any changes in the prescription. If drug substitution were legalized, neither the physician nor the patient could be certain that a prescription was dispensed exactly as written. It is important that the doctor and patient have confidence that the medicine dispensed was what the doctor intended."

ADVERTISING

In the Autumn of 1975, representatives of the two county medical societies met in Oklahoma City with the Congress of County (continued on page S-4)



A doctor's office (above) and a pharmacy (below) during the anti-substitution campaign.

