

Forgetting for a moment those who seek out this man to obtain a supply of "uppers" to get through the day, such doctors have a ready-made parade of victims in any community.

They are the tired, overweight housewives; the self-conscious overweight teenagers; or, for that matter, any overweight citizens.

These people see in the "diet doctor" an easy solution to their problem and they end up captive to his drugs, needing them just to "keep going."

One such physician can easily prescribe more than a million amphetamine tablets in the course of a year. Undoubtedly, in our community this man's practice is assisted by the unavailability of amphetamines elsewhere.

This is the outrageous part. This man comes and opens his practice, and he gets everyone he wants on amphetamines, because they cannot get it anywhere else.

Senator NELSON. Among the physicians in the county, you end up with some patients then coming to the physicians who do prescribe for treatment for some side effect, as a consequence of their taking the drug?

Dr. GELLERT. Yes; I think everyone who practices primary medicine, internal medicine, or family practice, sees patients who of course are certain they have a thyroid problem, because they are overactive, and they have the shakes, and they cannot sleep, or they have lost too much weight, and one of the first questions we ask is, what medicines are you taking, and more times than we would like, we find that they are on amphetamines.

Some of our old patients withhold this information from us, because they are embarrassed, that they have gone elsewhere to seek a drug we would normally not prescribe.

Senator NELSON. I see.

Dr. GELLERT. And, Senator Nelson, a great deal has been said about why did not the physicians police their ranks.

We are asked, why don't we do something about these people.

We would like to, we would like to very much.

As I mentioned before, frequently, presently they lie outside the normal channels of control, they are not members of our society, they do not practice with any staff of the local hospitals.

Until recently in the State of New York, to discipline the physicians, to take away his license, was almost an unheard of affair.

It required getting involved with the department of education, they were the ones who held our licensing permits, and they were the only ones who were able to handle this, and it would appear that indeed, that instead of cooperating with the State medical society, that we were often at odds with our State medical society, but recently our Governor, Governor Carey, signed into law a change in the procedure, and we now have a disciplinary board, which is set up in the department of health, and do have input, the physicians do have input, they do have input to the board, but the financing is so poor that investigative studies cannot be done, and we are way behind in cases that should be looked into, including people like those men who are pushing pills in our community.