

(STATEMENT BY
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(BEFORE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MONOPOLY
(SENATE SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE
(NOVEMBER 18, 1976

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Committee, I appear today as a representative of some 250 physicians who decided to attack a problem of drug abuse among their patients without waiting for governmental guidelines, prohibitions, or coercion. We are proud of our efforts and we are gratified by the results. But now, five years after deciding to "stick to our principles," we are convinced that some form of federal regulation is necessary if we are really to succeed.

Our community is Huntington, New York, a township of some 200,000 people on the Eastern end of Long Island. The drug we have attempted to control is the amphetamine, its immediate family, and its cousins the anti-obesity medications.

Five years ago, in the face of a rapidly increasing problem of drug abuse, Huntington physicians decided to stop writing amphetamine prescriptions. We hoped that by this voluntary act we would remove a sizeable number of these drugs from circulation and reduce the number of drugs which could be abused. To accomplish this task we conducted seminars, distributed the latest scientific data, held hospital staff meetings, and met with community agencies. After examining the evidence it was clear to anyone familiar with evaluating scientific data that, except for the rare problems of narcolepsy and the treatment of certain types of hyperactive children, amphetamines had no bona fide use in the practice of medicine. Specifically, there was more than enough evidence to support the conclusion that amphetamines had no place in the treatment of obesity.

Overnight the prescribing habits of Huntington physicians changed. From several hundred amphetamine prescriptions a year, the average pharmacy found it was dispensing only one or two amphetamine prescriptions a month.