

Senator NELSON. You have a letter with your testimony from Cook County Hospital, and that will be made part of the record.
[The letter follows:]

COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL,
Chicago, Ill., January 23, 1979.

SYDNEY WOLFE, M.D.,
Health Research Group,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR DOCTOR WOLFE: On July 1, 1974, Darvon in all its forms was banned from the prescription options for all physicians working in the outpatient setting of our hospital (the General Medical Clinic of Fantus Clinic). This is the largest clinic by far in the Cook County Hospital complex seeing on an average of 200 patients per day. The doctors are predominantly members of the house staff; each of our 160 Department of Medicine trainees attends that clinic one session per week. The same rules apply to other specialty clinics under the jurisdiction of the Department of Medicine which average another 200 patient encounters per day.

The reasons for eliminating Darvon from the drug list included high cost and absence of any therapeutic superiority over aspirin and aspirin related drugs for its legitimate indications. Another, more serious concern was our observation, in this large public hospital, that Darvon was increasingly utilized as an illicit drug by persons who had become dependent upon it. We concluded that an agent devoid of any significant, unique value which was the object of dangerous abuse by growing numbers of people, had no place on our hospital outpatient formulary.

While I feel that we served our patients well by avoiding this potentially dangerous drug, we've also served the public which supports us with tax dollars by avoiding an unnecessary, large expenditure. But most important, we have trained in these five years over 300 physicians to practice medicine without resorting to this much overused drug.

Finally, it is most interesting and gratifying to note that following the excellent experience of the Department of Medicine outpatient clinics (elimination of this drug without physician or patient difficulty), the Drug and Formulary Committee of the entire hospital decided in June 1977 to delete the drug from the hospital formulary (see attached communication from Mr. E. H. Stinebaugh, Director of Pharmacy Services). The entire medical staff had so diminished its "dependence" on Darvon that it took nearly 18 months for the existing supplies to be exhausted. Since there are over 500 doctors in training at Cook County Hospital, one can assert that a significant number of physicians on the threshold of their training have a unique therapeutic advantage over their contemporaries.

Sincerely yours,

QUENTIN D. YOUNG, M.D.
Chairman, Department of Medicine.

Attachment.

COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL,
Chicago, Ill., March 8, 1978.

Memo to: Medical Staff.

From: Ernest H. Stinebaugh, Director, Department of Pharmacy Services.

Re: Propoxyphene HCl (Darvon).

At the Drug and Formulary Committee Meeting in June, 1977 propoxyphene HCl was deleted from the formulary. Provisions were made at that time to continue using existing stocks until depleted. The stocks of propoxyphene HCl are now near depletion and the drug will no longer be available on prescription in Cook County Hospital or health centers.

The committee made its decision based upon several review articles:

1. Drug Therapy Review: Propoxyphene, A Review, Miller RR et al, *American Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, Volume 34, April, 1977, page 413ff
2. Propoxyphene HCl A Critical Review, Miller RR, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Volume 213, Number 6, August 10, 1977, page 996ff
3. *Medical Letter*, Volume 12, Number 2, January 23, 1970, page 5 as well as considerations that
4. Propoxyphene is a controlled substance and the burden of providing proof of use and distribution outweighs its usefulness,