

16700 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

Chairman Nelson, Members of the Monopoly and Anticompetitive Activities Subcommittee: Gentlemen, I am very pleased to be here this morning representing the Drug Enforcement Administration at this hearing on the use and abuse of dextropropoxyphene.

Dextropropoxyphene, more commonly called propoxyphene, is related chemically and pharmacologically to methadone. Propoxyphene is used orally for the relief of mild to moderate pain.

Propoxyphene was first marketed in the United States in 1957 by the Eli Lilly Company under the trade name, Darvon. Within a few years, it became the most prescribed drug in America; twenty-two years later, it continues to maintain a considerable share of the market. In 1978, of the 1.4 billion prescriptions dispensed in retail pharmacies, 31.2 million were for products which contained propoxyphene. In this country, 59 companies now market approximately 150 products which contain propoxyphene alone or in combination with other substances. Almost half of these drugs are trade-name products. Clearly then, Mr. Chairman, any decisions regarding propoxyphene will have considerable impact on the pharmaceutical industry.