

16820 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

CONCLUSION

In summary, Mr. Chairman, the current status of propoxyphene presents us with an important and complex regulatory problem. The problems associated with its misuse are indeed troubling; but they must be weighed against significant benefits from the drug.

Propoxyphene is widely used; it provides pain relief for many people. Although it is not a powerful analgesic, it has advantages for persons who cannot tolerate aspirin or acetaminophen. It is prescribed and administered or dispensed in a special medical setting that provides significant psychological amplification of its affects. I am sorry that we cannot offer you a more definitive conclusion at this time, but we are still developing our analysis. These hearings have helped materially in that regard, as well as drawing public attention to a disturbing abuse problem. We will continue to give the matter close scrutiny.

Mr. Chairman, my staff and I will attempt to answer any questions you may have.