

cate the trend of drug costs.

From the Consumer Price Index of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it is obvious that retail drug prices have been decreasing steadily since about 1958.

From three independent surveys, it is equally obvious that these prices have been increasing during the same period.

The disparity is based on the fact that the indices are measuring different things.

The BLS index is aimed at measuring the change in a relatively fixed "market basket" of about a dozen selected drug products. During the past decade, the prices of these items have, on the average, decreased. The items selected for the "basket," however, do not accurately represent the most widely used drugs, and they do not reflect the changes in consumer expenditures which constantly occur when new and more costly products are introduced on the market and replace less costly products.

On the other hand, the independent surveys are not concerned with the price changes of any individual drug products, but instead are aimed at determining the average