

THE DRUG DISTRIBUTORS

Between the manufacturers who make drugs and the patients who purchase them is a large, complex distribution network.

Included in this network are the major drug vendors--independent pharmacies, chain drugstores, prescription pharmacies, mail order pharmacies, hospital pharmacies, dispensing physicians, and others. Considered with them in this section are the drug wholesalers.

Of the average prescription drug dollar paid by the consumer, about 50 cents is now taken by the manufacturer, 10 cents by the wholesaler, and 40 cents by the retailer.

During the past three decades, the operations of this system have undergone significant changes. For example, before World War II, most of all the drug products handled were in bulk form, and were compounded into tablets, capsules, powders, solutions or other dosage forms by the pharmacist. Now about 95 percent are furnished by the manufacturer in final dosage form, ready for consumption.