

Formerly, wholesalers handled the overwhelming proportion of drug products. Now, with manufacturers tending to sell directly to hospitals and the larger independent pharmacies and chains, the wholesalers handle only about 48 percent of the dollar volume of the market.

In the years to come, other changes in the number and nature of both wholesale and retail outlets will undoubtedly occur as the result of continuing economic pressures, health manpower shortages, the expansion of new types of careers in pharmacy, and the introduction of innovations enabling drug distributors to respond more effectively and efficiently to the health needs of patients.

Prescription Price Information

There is an obvious need for patients to be able to determine readily the prices charged by the various pharmacies in their community. This appears to be particularly important in the case of long-term maintenance drugs.

The Task Force recognizes the difficulties in making such information easily available. Many patients are not told which drug has been prescribed for them--or are unable to decipher the physician's prescription. In many States,