

3802 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

laws or regulations forbid pharmacies to advertise; even without such rules, however, advertising current prices on many thousands of different drugs and dosage forms would pose formidable practical problems. Physicians, especially those in large cities, are likely to be unaware of the different prices which may be set at different pharmacies.

The Task Force also recognizes that the retail price of the prescription includes not only the cost of the ingredients, but also in some instances the availability of home delivery and 24-hour-a-day operations, as well as the professional services of the pharmacist--and that different pharmacists may wish to place different values on such services.

It recognizes that many or most patients may wish to select a pharmacy more on the basis of convenient location than on the basis of price.

Nevertheless, if the patient is to maintain the right to select a pharmacy, he also has a right to know the prices it charges and to compare these with other prices.

The Task Force finds there is a need for medical associations, pharmacy associations and consumer groups, working together at the local level, to develop mechanisms