

possible because he knows that an inferior batch of one drug will adversely affect his entire line of products. He must protect his reputation as does any other manufacturer. In fact, the drug manufacturer is more vulnerable than other manufacturers because the word travels fast throughout the medical profession when something goes wrong. This is certainly in the best interest of the public.

I would like to point out that the pharmaceutical firms provide services for the patients and medical profession which are essential for proper medical care. Generic drug firms do not provide these services.

A vital and indispensable service offered by the ethical pharmaceutical firms is a medical department available 24 hours a day every day of the year. If a physician finds he has an untoward reaction caused by a particular medication he can call upon the medical department for assistance and advice. When a drug does not seem to have the desired effect the medical department is available to help solve the problem. It must be remembered that the medical department has accumulated the reports of physicians from all section of the country representing the sum total of millions of doses for each medication. How can we overlook the importance of this one particular service for the sick of our country. We must not gloss over this service by stating we know and appreciate the contributions made by the pharmaceutical firms but comparisons show that the generic drugs are cheaper for the most part and therefore the patient has been gouged by the brand name drug firm. This price differential would not be as great if the generic drug firms offered the services of a medical department.

I don't believe that this committee or the American public would tolerate the loss of the services of the medical departments of the ethical pharmaceutical firms. Indeed, this committee should insist that the generic drug firms provide the services of a medical department similar to the services provided over the years by the medical departments of the proprietary drug firms.

The medical department is only one of many services provided by the pharmaceutical firms and these services cost money which is reflected in the cost of drugs.

Another example is the professional relations department which will respond to a wide variety of requests made by the individual physician.

Pharmaceutical firms are always ready to supply a rare drug or a drug in short supply for a single patient. A simple telephone call by a physician starts in motion the mechanism to bring to a patient the required lifesaving drug. The cost in man-hours expended for the benefit of one patient plus the other costs involved are not recovered by the drug firms. It is a service.

Senator NELSON. Doctor, let me interrupt for one moment. It is all included in the cost of production like any other overhead cost. They put it in the price of the drug. It is a cost of operation, just as an advertisement is a cost of operation. They recover it from the drugs all right, otherwise it would not be the highest profit industry in this country.

Dr. ALFANO. I know, but it is a service to the patient. The generic firms do not offer this to the doctor or the patient.

Senator NELSON. I just want to say it is included in the cost of the drug.