

Massive advertising campaigns certainly do influence medical students, but only when conducted in the absence of reliable, unbiased, and current drug information—such as the Medical Letter, or, hopefully, the AMA Drug Evaluation.

Senator NELSON. May I ask a question there?

Mr. MARTIN. Yes, sir.

Senator NELSON. What percentage of the students would you guess receive or read the Medical Letter regularly? Do you know?

Mr. MARTIN. I do not know at this point in time—like I said, our information is incomplete, but we know of 15 schools where the entire sophomore class receives it while they are taking pharmacology. At the end of their sophomore year they are faced with the option of subscribing or not subscribing. At that point, I cannot tell you what percentage do. I do see a lot of them in my school. I subscribe to the Medical Letter.

Senator NELSON. What is the student's subscription price for the Medical Letter?

Mr. MARTIN. At our school we get it for \$8, but I think there is an arrangement between our pharmacology department and the Medical Letter. I cannot tell you if you just bought it from the company what it would be. I think it is \$15 or \$18 a year for practicing physicians. But I think students have a decreased rate.

The widespread use of the Physicians' Desk Reference as a single source of information by medical students, house staff, and faculty clearly creates a problem in regard to obtaining information with the previously mentioned characteristics. For 2 consecutive years, the SAMA House of Delegates has urged the AMA and/or the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, to publish a suitable reference source. From the preliminary reports I have read, the AMA Drug Evaluation may well indeed serve this purpose.

The naive feeling that medical students are at the mercy of the pharmaceutical industry in regard to their training in pharmacology and therapeutics overlooks several important points. They are:

(1) The available basic information in these areas is increasing and each class of medical students is exposed to more complete mechanisms of action and therapeutic fundamentals;

(2) The academic setting is the source of a large amount of the anticommercial and antidrug company discussion and a few medical students are left unexposed to these criticisms;

(3) University administrations are generally unsympathetic to drug promotions and most medical students are sequestered from detail men throughout their medical school careers;

(4) In many schools, gifts must be approved by the school administration before there can be any distribution of material;

(5) Prescription-writing habits are generally developed by watching housestaff physicians write orders, who usually are limited by university formularies;

(6) Today's medical students are more critical than ever before and questions concerning activity, efficacy and price are being asked with increasing frequency.

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Martin, if I may, in point No. 4 you indicate in many schools gifts must be approved by the school administration.

Mr. MARTIN. Yes, sir.