

accept gifts from drug companies makes it difficult to be critical of drug companies without appearing both rude and inconsistent. We feel the drug companies do effectively forestall not only criticism of drug companies but even a desire to examine issues which might conceivably lead toward such criticism. In this way, such gifts are detrimental to the ability of the profession to become either well-informed or independently minded on broad issues concerning drug prescription.

I would like to add, when we returned the gifts to Eli Lilly, which was perhaps ungentlemanly and rude and in a sense inconsistent, Eli Lilly responded by saying they thought we were very ungrateful, which brings up the whole problem: why should we be grateful to a company whose products we have to prescribe to patients?

In concluding this list of ways in which we feel drug company advertisement could influence us, I want to emphasize I do not think any of the points apply differently to gifts that are educational and gifts that are not educational. And, obviously, I am critical of the position of the Student American Medical Association that such a distinction should be made and that it is right to receive educational gifts.

To comment on the fellowships we have received from drug companies, there is apparently a trend toward decreasing Government support for medical student fellowships and loans, and increasing support from the drug companies. For summer research fellowships drug company funds helped fill the gap left by the withdrawal of the Public Health Service support, as noted above. Now Congress is considering a cut in the health professions student loan program. Correspondingly, drug company fellowships of \$3,200 each have been awarded to eight of the students in the class of 1972, the class behind us. None of these fellowships were held by members of our class.

We feel that financial support of medical students by drug companies is undesirable for the same reasons that it is undesirable for medical students to accept free educational materials from drug companies. The student who receives \$700-\$3,200 from a drug company has accepted a stake in its pricing policies, made it hard for himself to be critical of those policies, and risked the appearance of a conflict of interest.

If we contrast drug company funds with Government funds as a source of support, we feel that Government funds are derived from a progressive income tax, while drug company profits represent a tax on the ill. The latter is essentially regressive, since a high proportion of drug users are the elderly and the poor.

The support of student summer research is an excellent educational program. It would be seriously disrupted if drug company funds were withdrawn without being replaced from other sources. Hence, we feel that Government funds should be restored before drug company funding is discouraged.

The bagful of instruments from Eli Lilly & Co. was the costliest single item given by a drug company, and the only one we would be compelled to replace at our own expense if we returned it. Hence we thought that returning this item would dramatize our concern with the relationship between medical students and drug companies, and most importantly, direct the attention of medical students at other schools to these issues. On January 31, 1969, the letter appended at the end