

Senator NELSON. I quite frankly would wonder what stories the journals carry that are of more significance to the practice of medicine in this country this year than the story of this report of this distinguished panel.

Mr. HARRISON. I am sure that is so, Senator. But in the American Medical News on April 14, on page 1, we carried this story. It is a page 1 story in a publication that goes to all the physicians.

Senator NELSON. Did you mention the names of any drugs in it?

Mr. HARRISON. I will be happy to get a copy of that story.

Senator NELSON. I think I have read that one.

There has been much comment here by you gentlemen about the FDA and how they are the ones to advise on efficacy. I wrote a letter to Dr. Ley on July 18, in which I said:

DEAR MR. COMMISSIONER:

In a speech delivered before the American College of Legal Medicine on July 13, 1969, you stated that:

We have discussed with AMA representatives the desirability of having the AMA News present a better balance of significant issues in the drugs area.

In this connection would you please let me know in some detail what the Food and Drug Administration has done to try to involve the AMA in a balanced presentation of information on drugs? In addition, I am interested in ascertaining what the AMA has done in this respect, especially Panalba and other antibiotics.

I received a letter on July 25, which I will put into the record. I shall not read it all, just some excerpts. This is to me from Dr. Ley.

Mr. HARRISON. I would appreciate it if you would read it all if we are going to be asked to comment on it, Senator.

Senator NELSON. I was only going to comment on this part that I read, because I am getting at a letter submitted by Dr. Ley to the AMA News.

Our responsibility under the law, as you know, is to keep the medical profession and the public constantly informed of our findings and actions on drugs as a result of our own studies and those of our expert advisers. To fulfill this responsibility, we must depend on the support and cooperation not only of the news media but of the medical journals which directly reach the doctors.

He comments:

The American Medical News summarized the release and did not print the list of drugs. The Journal of American Medicine contained no mention of the FDA proposal, although I had suggested in a letter to AMA representatives that the Academy comments on the 78 combination antibiotics should be publicized.

Early in May 1969, I went to AMA headquarters in Chicago to talk personally with a top AMA official about improving communications between the FDA and physicians. The official agreed on the need to promote the flow of accurate drug information to doctors and on the desirability of using AMA publications to help achieve this purpose. Since that time, however, I have noticed no change in coverage of our drug actions by the Journal of American Medicine and the American Medical News.

Generally speaking, however, I feel the space devoted by AMA publications to important drug issues, particularly that of the NAS-NRC evaluation of the combination antibiotics, has been scanty and not at all commensurate with the public and medical interest in them. With respect to Panalba, I responded in a detailed letter of July 3, '69, to a request by Dr. Ernest B. Howard, Executive Vice President of the AMA, for evidence we considered in deciding to withdraw the product from the market.

In a note attached to the letter, I told Dr. Howard that I had no objection to his publicizing my reply in an AMA publication, but, indeed, that I would welcome it. To date, as far as I know, the letter has not been published.