Dr. RYAN. I was sitting through the prior discussion and I think that on balance, the committee hearings will have the opportunity to hear from people of all interests, experiences, and persuasions. And I think this is all to the good and I appreciate the opportunity to express my own in this respect.

I think out of this we would hope would come an awareness that there are problems and patients should be so informed, that we need more information and that we hope that the support for that type of research will come from the Federal Government, because it is involved, with long-range type of observations of patients.

Senator DOLE. Have you observed any shortcomings with reference to the pharmaceutical companies themselves? Are there areas where you feel they can improve communication of information?

Dr. RYAN. Really, I have very little comment about this. I think that the interchange between the regulatory agency—that is, the FDA and the pharmaceutical agency—the interchange between them I believe provides the physician with the kinds of information he needs.

Senator DOLE. That is all.

Thank you very much, Doctor.

Dr. Meier. Dr. Meier is professor of statistics at the University of Chicago.

You may handle your statement any way you wish. You may summarize or read the entire text. It will all be made a part of the record. Proceed in any fashion you wish.

STATEMENT OF PAUL MEIER, PH. D., PROFESSOR OF STATISTICS, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, ILL.

Dr. MEIER. I understand that, Senator, thank you.

A decade ago, the first oral contraceptives were made available and shown to be highly effective and widely acceptable. Side effects were noted from the start, but oral contraceptives have become increasingly accepted nonetheless. Many of these side effects are transient and disappear after a time, and many occur in some users and not in others. Other possible side effects are potentially very serious and occur seldom enough that an individual physician cannot hope to make judgments about them on the basis of his own experience. It is this latter class of side effects with which I shall be concerned.

There are two aspects of public policy with respect to such effects which I believe require clear identification.

There is, first, the right of an informed individual to elect to take a reasonable risk in order to achieve some goal which he believes desirable. I make several trips a year from Chicago to Washington. Purely for convenience I travel by air and not by rail. I am one of the few who have examined the available information on risk in the two modes of travel and I judge that I am accepting a non-negligible risk in choosing the convenience of air travel, but I do it quite deliberately. On the other hand, I no longer smoke cigarettes, although I was once a regular smoker. The benefits were in that case