

**STATEMENT OF DR. HERBERT RATNER, PUBLIC HEALTH
DIRECTOR, OAK PARK, ILL.**

Dr. RATNER. Senator, I think it is a relatively short statement, and I think it would really save time if I read it, after watching what went on today.

Senator DOLE. Go ahead.

Dr. RATNER. My name is Dr. Herbert Ratner. I am a full-time public health physician and Director of Public Health in Oak Park, Ill. I am a former editor of the "Bulletin of the American Association of Public Health Physicians" and am presently editor of "Child & Family Quarterly."

For many years I have been chairman of the Maternal and Child Health Committee of the Illinois Association of Medical Health Officers. I am also a member of the Family Planning Coordinating Council of Metropolitan Chicago, Inc., which is hosted by the Planned Parenthood Association of Chicago.

Because I believe each witness before this committee should make himself crystal clear on this score, I state, for the record, that I am not indebted to any of the manufacturers of the birth-control pill by virtue of being the recipient of grants, of clinical or research support, of consultant or writing fees, of expense accounts, or funds or favors of any kind. Nor do I own stock in any pharmaceutical firm.

Because of my public health training and experience in epidemic intelligence, I first became alerted to the actual dangers of the oral contraceptives—The Pill—early in 1962 when reports of thromboembolic deaths associated with the pill first appeared in the English medical literature.

Such reports by private physicians following the marketing of a new drug frequently forecast impending trouble. It was on the basis of such reports that the thalidomide disaster was averted in the United States: that the Salk vaccine was recalled for further evaluation in 1955; and that numerous drugs have been removed from the market in the past. A prominent example of the latter is MER-29.

As a result of this alert, as well as the many theoretical fears engendered by the use of a powerful systemic synthetic chemical, especially one intended to disrupt a major normal physiological process in healthy women, and the fact that the pill was intended as a mass prescription for a major segment of our society—women in the prime of life—the potential and actual dangers of the pill became an immediate professional interest to me and the subject of continuing study.

My first public statement questioning the pill was addressed to the Illinois Public Aid Commission, November 6, 1962.

At that time the Commission was contemplating underwriting an extensive birth-control program made possible, they believed, by the availability of what was taken to be an effective and safe birth-control pill. This 11-page memorandum was entitled "Practical and Financial Problems Associated with the Use of Oral Contraceptives in Tax Supported Programs."

The conclusion regarding the finances of such a program was that a conscientious observance of precautionary medical procedures