

Public Health Service has also taken action to more fully develop possible approaches to effective drug utilization reviews, as recommended in the report of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's task force on prescription drugs. A research study of the methodology and feasibility of this technique is currently underway.

We believe that the recent actions related to the drug selection process, if properly implemented, should improve control over drug operations at the local level. In implementing such actions we believe that emphasis should be placed on providing physicians employed by the Federal Government with appropriate information concerning available drugs to assist them in making decisions relating to drug therapy.

Senator NELSON. May I interrupt? When you say the Public Health Service has taken action to more fully develop possible approaches to effective drug utilization reviews as you mentioned in the report of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's task force on prescription drugs, what action have they taken?

Mr. CROWTHER. The task force, as part of its effort, reviewed the utilization of drugs by various organizations with HEW. It made specific recommendations on supporting research projects to develop and test approaches to drug utilization review and emphasized the importance of supplying physicians with drug information and guidelines for rational prescribing.

For the past few years HEW has been funding a comprehensive drug utilization review study. Also the agency recently issued a directive prohibiting the use of ineffective drugs by any Federal facility under the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. This ban extends to possibly effective drugs as well as the ineffective drugs.

The directive goes a little further, prohibiting the use of these drugs under any Federal program, which would include Medicare and Medicaid.

Senator NELSON. Of course, a layman could come to the conclusion that you ought to recommend not using a drug that the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council has said is ineffective. What are they doing about the problem we are discussing?

Mr. CROWTHER. Well, a number of the task force's recommendations could result in greater uses of generic drugs.

If you would like, we could supply the specific information on their recommendations.

Senator NELSON. This is the 1969 report we are referring to of the task force on prescription drugs and I see a total of 25 recommendations.

Mr. CROWTHER. Yes.

Senator NELSON. I would have to refresh my memory by rereading them, but are they taking these 25 recommendations and attempting in some fashion to get them implemented?

Mr. CROWTHER. They are implementing a number of the recommendations.

Senator NELSON. Is there any doubt about the recommendation 9.

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare should provide expanded support to medical schools, enabling them to include a course in clinical pharmacology as an integral part of the medical curriculum?