Veterans Administration
Department of Medicine and Surgery
Washington, D. C. 20420

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SUBJ: Implementation of NAS/NRC Drug Efficacy Studies Information

TO : Directors of Hospitals, Domiciliary, Outpatient Clinics and Regional Offices with Outpatient Clinics

1. The Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents, VACO, has reviewed VA's policies regarding the use of drug products whose efficacy was questioned by various panels of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), National Research Council (NRC).

2. A copy of the drug efficacy study of the NAS/NRC submitted to the Commissioner of Food and Drugs was sent to each VA Therapeutic Agents and Pharmacy Reviews Committee in 1969, and includes the names of the reviewing members. Their professional qualifications for this task are recognized as outstanding.

3. Since that time, and with increasing frequency in recent months, the FDA has been taking action to publicize and remove from the market drug products which they concluded lack substantial evidence of effectiveness, as defined in the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, or have an unfavorable benefit to risk ratio. Enclosed is a list of such drug products compiled by the FDA. Subsequent lists will be distributed as they become available with an appropriate covering letter to assure that your pharmacist obtains all lists. It should be borne in mind that additional clinical evidence submitted by the manufacturer may result in a reclassification of some of these products. If this occurs, you will be promptly notified.

4. The Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents recommends the following procedures for immediate implementation at each VA facility:

a. Drug products on the attached FDA list will be reviewed by the hospital Therapeutic Agents and Pharmacy Reviews Committee and if present, will be removed from the hospital formulary and therefore will be unavailable for prescribing by VA staff physicians or dispensing by VA pharmacies. Wherever reference is made to physicians, it will be interpreted to include dentists, podiatrists or others authorized by law to prescribe for patients. Any drug products from the list which the hospital committee desires to retain in the formulary will be submitted with justification for retention to the Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents, VACO, for purposes of further review and action.

b. Unless retained in the station formulary, when prescriptions for drug products on the attached FDA list are received from fee physicians treating service-connected patients or private physicians treating A&A patients, the physician concerned will be contacted by a VA physician or pharmacist. VA policy against dispensing these products will be

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ATTACHMENT A