

We also emphasize the role of each Therapeutic Agents and Pharmacy Reviews Committee in a continuing review of prescribing practices and drug usage in their hospital. The policy that the purchase of high cost drugs could not be justified when equally effective but less expensive preparations were available is emphasized.

We have also taken, or are taking, a series of further steps which I feel will contribute to our common objective of the most rational prescribing attainable. We are placing greater emphasis upon the importance of the role of our hospitals Therapeutics Agents and Pharmacy Reviews Committees. I am certain their efforts in establishing and maintaining good station formularies have been strengthened by the attention and emphasis focused upon this problem. The minutes of each Therapeutic Agents and Pharmacy Reviews Committee meeting that is held, at least once a month, are forwarded to our central office for review. This monitoring by central office assures that drugs considered ineffective have been deleted from the station formulary or are not approved for purchasing and inclusion in the formulary. The recent reports submitted to our central office have reflected major interest and attention from our hospitals throughout the country.

Our local Therapeutic Agents and Pharmacy Reviews Committees at each of our hospitals and our Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents in central office have the primary responsibility for assuring rational drug selection and for monitoring the quality, safety and efficacy of drugs used in the Veterans' Administration. These committees bring together the principal medical and pharmacy staff members and are supported as required by the professional and administrative staffs of the hospitals and clinics. They include experts on various medical specialties to assure that information available from several sources is considered in the committee's actions. It is important that any examination of our Agency's drug selection and procurement program consider the mission, membership and scope of responsibilities of these committees. I am attaching to this statement as appendix A an outline of their composition and functions.

(The document referred to is as follows:)

Appendix A

STATEMENT OF COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS OF VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION THERAPEUTICS AGENTS AND PHARMACY REVIEWS COMMITTEES AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON THERAPEUTIC AGENTS

The composition and functions of our Therapeutic Agents and Pharmacy Reviews Committees in each hospital and clinic and our Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents in the Central Office are:

Every Veterans Administration medical hospital and clinic has a Therapeutic Agents and Pharmacy Reviews Committee to assure that regular quality control reviews are established and carried out for therapeutic agents and Pharmacy programming.

The Committees are generally composed of members of the Medical Executive Committee of the hospital and clinic. This Committee includes the Chiefs of the major patient care services. The Chief Pharmacist serves as the recorder. In most hospitals and clinics, the Director or Chief of Staff serves as Chairman. The principal functions of the Therapeutic Agents and Pharmacy Reviews Committees are:

1. To serve in an advisory capacity to management on policies pertaining to the use of drugs.