

STATEMENT OF DR. CHARLES C. EDWARDS, COMMISSIONER, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION; ACCOMPANIED BY DR. HENRY S. SIMMONS, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF DRUGS; AND PETER BARTON HUTT, GENERAL COUNSEL

Dr. EDWARDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would, first of all, like to discuss with the committee today some of the problems in the drugs and drug use in this country.

First of all, I would like to introduce my colleagues. On my left is Dr. Henry S. Simmons, Director of our Bureau of Drugs, and on my right is Peter Barton Hutt, our general counsel.

This morning, as I indicated, we would like to discuss some of the problems in the drugs and drug use in this country. In addition, we would like to review for you the findings of the drug efficacy, and I would like to discuss some of the reasons for the existence of these problems, and to describe for you the progress we have made over the past years toward their resolution.

We will also, as requested, review for you the findings of the drug efficacy study, the impact it has made on therapeutics in this country and the present status of our implementation programs.

Before discussing the drug efficacy study and its effects on therapeutics, it might be helpful to review with you some general aspects of drug use and some current problems we see in therapeutics in this country.

There are currently approximately 35,000 prescription drug products and several hundred thousand OTC drug products on the American market.

Each year a multibillion dollar effort is made to market, promote, and sell these products. In some OTC products approximately 30 percent of receipt of sales is spent in promotion and in the prescription drug area expenditures on promotion approach in magnitude those on research. Despite the contention that advertising and promotion is educational, most of the drug promotion we see is designed primarily to sell, to motivate the physician to prescribe, and the consumer to buy.

In part, due to the influence of such promotional efforts, these drugs are being increasingly prescribed and such use is increasing rapidly. The American public is currently receiving over 2 billion prescriptions per year and it is estimated that within 4 to 5 years this may increase by 50 percent.

In no area is this increase more dramatically evident than in the case of psychotropic drugs where in 1969 over 1 billion doses of amphetamines and 2½ billion doses of barbiturates were used. The magnitude of other psychoactive drug use is reflected by the fact that some 5 to 6 billion doses were distributed in 1969, representing a 65-percent increase in the use of these drugs over a 4-year period.

We have a rapidly growing, frequently troublesome, occasionally tragic, and to a large extent needless and avoidable problem on our hands in the misuse of drugs in America.

Senator NELSON. Doctor, just for clarification, when you talk about the misuse of drugs in America, you are referring to prescription drugs, are you not?

Dr. EDWARDS. That is correct, and we are, of course—