

It also asked field station Therapeutics Agents and Pharmacy Reviews committees to carefully screen all drugs approved for use at their stations to assure use of the most effective products. It emphasized that those drugs rated no higher than possibly effective should be reviewed and consideration given by the committee to approving alternative use of similar drugs having a higher effectiveness classification. It underscored the fact that federal funds should be expended only to purchase the most effective drug products available for a given condition and asked that field station committees assure themselves that sound professional reasons govern their selection. DM&S Circular 10-72-27, dated January 25, 1972, reaffirmed the initial policy and instructed the directors of hospitals and clinics to take whatever steps were necessary to assure compliance. As a part of the overall review of rational drug prescribing, the VA Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents recommended in April of 1972 that our policy on ineffective or possibly effective drugs be reinforced by another issuance of the policy. DM&S Circular 10-72-92 summarizes our policy that funds will not be expended for the purchase of drugs classified by FDA as ineffective or possibly effective with two exceptions:

1. Drug products for investigational use, and
2. Possibly effective drug products where no appropriate alternative means of drug therapy is available.

On May 25, 1972, we distributed to all VA field stations copies of the current listing of FDA classifications of drug effectiveness. We feel that these actions have almost eliminated the procurement of ineffective drugs, even though FDA still permits their manufacture and marketing.