

The manual was distributed free to all members of the AMA--about 300,000, of which 170,000 are practicing physicians. Large numbers have also been purchased by the Government, pharmacists, physicians in residence and intern training, nurses, and medical students. In 1972, the AMA began a survey of 2,000 physicians to determine the extent to which this manual has been used. The AMA hopes to complete the survey in June 1972.

We understand that a second edition of the manual is scheduled for publication shortly and will include changes designed to make it more useful including dosage guidelines, ingredients of over-the-counter drugs, and additional trade name items.

GOVERNMENT SPECIFICATIONS FOR DRUGS

One requirement of an efficient supply system for prescription drugs is the development of specifications which can be used to encourage competition and assure controlled quality production of drugs with the desired therapeutic effect.

Both DPSC and VA develop specifications for items they intend to buy competitively. These items account for about 25 percent of all VA centrally managed drug items and 99 percent of all DPSC centrally managed drug items. The remaining items procured centrally by the agencies are designated for purchase from preselected sole sources. Data for preparation and development of DPSC specifications is obtained primarily from the manufacturers of drug products.

Although DPSC attempts to purchase virtually all of its drug items competitively, it has been able to do so for only about 51 percent of its approximately 1,100 drug items. The