

The Department does commend the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for your efforts in attempting to resolve a problem area, and we would offer our services and assistance, if such are needed, in any further evaluation or explanatory information.

Mr. Chairman, if it is appropriate, at this time, I would call on Mr. Peebles to offer some comments regarding the Colorado State program.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. PEEBLES. Mr. Chairman, I came along with Mr. Margreiter here because I have been on the advisory council for the State of Colorado ever since it has been started. It is now in its seventh year.

Also I came along because I am a practicing pharmacist. I know that you get to hear from a lot of distinguished gentlemen, deans and doctors and professors, et cetera, and I thought maybe you would just like to see somebody that has to meet the public eyeball to eyeball every day in answer to their questions and fill these prescriptions for them.

I can tell you we have had a real successful program in the State of Colorado, and a great deal of it has been due to a lot of public spirited people who have devoted hours and hours of their time at no cost to the State. We have had very few complaints from the vendors, even the physicians or the doctors, because—we can just say it was a group of about 40 of your peers that figured this out and it soon puts a stop to it.

So our program is very successful, everybody gets paid within a matter of 30 days from the time they submit their bills and just in general I think it has been a real fine program.

The CHAIRMAN. You haven't had significant objection or resistance from the practicing pharmacists themselves?

Mr. PEEBLES. No, we sure haven't, because if any of them have a complaint we can usually show them where they are at fault. For instance, I had one man tell me—it had taken him about 45 minutes to explain—and he hadn't yet been paid, and we discovered he hadn't submitted his bills for over 90 days.

It is just things like that that are really no fault of the program. If somebody doesn't get paid it is their fault and not the fault of the program.

The CHAIRMAN. Has this program added anything to the paper work that a pharmacist would not otherwise have to perform in his practice?

Mr. PEEBLES. Well, naturally, any third party program is going to add to the time it takes. For instance, even with our billing form and our data processing machine, it will still take on an average of twice as long to fill a prescription for medicaid cases as it would for the general public, just that much longer to fill out that claim form. So it does take longer.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there any way to further simplify it?

Mr. PEEBLES. Well, we have simplified it. I would say that our forms have been simplified at least a half a dozen times, and it is getting easier and easier. Right now we have many of our pharmacists that tell us that our form is the best, that it is better than even the blue cross form. It doesn't take near as long to fill out as the blue cross form does.