

Dr. PITTMAN. That would be generic prescribing. We never actually said that. I think that is a little further than we intended to go.

The CHAIRMAN. But that is what confuses me about this. If, in fact, you are saying in this resolution that the pharmacist shall select the drug—I am not talking about the compound——

Dr. PITTMAN. The drug product.

The CHAIRMAN. The drug product—how does the pharmacist do that unless the physician prescribes by generic names? Are you saying that if under this resolution the physician said 100 tablets of Paracort, that they could give Meticorten?

Dr. PITTMAN. The item which is not addressed in here is the mechanism, how that occurs, whether it should be a generic prescription, which would then be limited only if the physician wrote the name of a brand on there, or whether it should be some other mechanism. That really wasn't addressed in this resolution. And I think it was a good thing to go back and revise this and make it more explicit.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask another question. What again did you say was your interpretation of that paragraph? What does it mean precisely?

Dr. PITTMAN. That the physician would in general, unless he had a specific reason for restricting his choice to a specific brand, permit the substitution by the pharmacist.

The CHAIRMAN. How does that work, though, unless you provide that the physician must prescribe by the official name? And if that is what he does, the pharmacist makes the selection from whatever number of versions of the same drug he may have in his place. It is meaningless unless you say that if the doctor prescribes by the brand name, the pharmacist can still substitute any other compound, is that what you are saying, unless the physician writes below, you can't do it? In other words, you say the laws would not remove from the control of the physician the final decision. What is the final decision? The doctor writes the brand name Paracort or Meticorten or what have you. Is that the final decision? Are you saying that no matter what brand name the doctor writes, the pharmacist should have the right to substitute any other company's brand of that compound unless the physician puts a note at the bottom saying, you cannot substitute, is that what you are saying?

Dr. PITTMAN. I think this particular paragraph here is too brief to explain that adequately. It really doesn't address itself adequately to that. I think it is an inadequate statement in that sense. I think if we used the words "generic prescribing", that it might not have got past the October 25 meeting.

The CHAIRMAN. Because it meant something, and this one doesn't, is that what you are saying?

Dr. PITTMAN. This one doesn't specify whether writing the brand name itself is the decision.

The CHAIRMAN. You are all educated and professionals in this field. Didn't somebody ask what happens if a brand name is written? Didn't any of the members present ask whether the pharmacist can substitute a less expensive version for the brand name written by the physician?

Dr. PITTMAN. This was never presented. This was then reworked.