Products made by different manufacturers often vary in their inactive ingredients, formulation, purity, and biological availability. Patients may respond differently to the products of different manufacturers. Particularly when a patient has been stabilized on the products of one manufacturer, substitution without the prescriber's knowledge or consent can seriously impede the course of the patient's therapy.

Although NPC advocates the retention of laws prohibiting unauthorized substitution, the Council favors, and recommends whenever possible, a teamwork approach to product selection involving consultation and sharing of drug-product knowledge between the pharmacist and physician. NPC recognizes and respects the pharmacist's understanding of drug products, his awareness of relative costs, and his knowledge of the reputations of pharmaceutical manufacturers. Only the physician, however, examines the patient, diagnoses his condition, and observes the clinical results of the product he prescribes. Often the physician must carefully adjust drug dosage, gauging it as to onset, intensity, and duration of action, presence or absence of drug idiosyncracies, and other conditions he may note in following the prescribed course of therapy. Whenever possible, the knowledge of both the pharmacist and the physician should be combined to benefit the patient. But the physician must retain complete control of his patient's therapy. His selection of a drug product should not be changed without his knowledge and consent no matter how much a third party may know about the pharmacologic and chemical characteristics of drug products.