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Moreover, reimbursement systems must give consideration to the cost of professional services involved in dispensing a drug and a reasonable profit for the pharmacist, who is, after all, both a health professional and a private businessman.

There are still other issues that remain to be clarified, as the public comments on our proposed regulations quite properly indicate. But I think we have made enormous strides toward developing a responsible and equitable program. I intend to outline the elements of the program as we have proposed it, but first I would like to return to the issue of drug quality.

Drug Quality

As I said a moment ago, essential to the success of the MAC program is our ability to assure that drug products covered by the program all meet the same high standards of quality. I would like to take a few moments to discuss programs the Food and Drug Administration has undertaken and will undertake to provide this assurance.