

11998 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

COMMENTS CLEARLY DISTINGUISH, HOWEVER, BETWEEN THE BASIC POLICY ANNOUNCED BY THE SECRETARY AND THE PROPOSED PROGRAM FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT POLICY, AT LEAST IN ITS PRESENT FORM AS PUBLISHED AS A SERIES OF PROPOSED REGULATIONS IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER BEGINNING IN NOVEMBER, 1974.

WITH RESPECT TO THE PROGRAM FOR IMPLEMENTATION, WE FIND MANY FEATURES TO BE SOUND AND REASONABLE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE ALSO SEVERAL DETAILS WITH WHICH WE ARE NOT SATISFIED AND WHICH ARE CRITICAL AS TO OUR ABILITY TO SUPPORT THE RESULTANT PROGRAM.

BEFORE DISCUSSING SPECIFICS OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM, WE FEEL COMPELLED TO MENTION THAT IT IS MOST DISTRESSING TO US THAT HEW HAS PERMITTED THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE MAC PROGRAM TO FERMENT FOR WHAT IS NOW OVER A YEAR SINCE THE POLICY WAS ANNOUNCED. THIS DELAY IN PUTTING THE POLICY INTO EFFECT HAS PERMITTED ITS OPPONENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP AND CONDUCT A WELL-ORGANIZED PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN TO BUILD OPPOSITION IN SEVERAL QUARTERS TO THE MAC PROGRAM.

APHA IS WELL AWARE FROM COMMUNICATIONS IT HAS RECEIVED FROM PHARMACISTS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY THAT PHYSICIANS AND PHARMACISTS HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO AN INTENSE PRESSURE CAMPAIGN BY CERTAIN FIRMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY IN AN EFFORT TO GENERATE THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE MAC PROGRAM. WE ALSO KNOW FROM PROPAGANDA MATERIALS TRANSMITTED TO APHA THAT WHAT PHARMACISTS AND PHYSICIANS HAVE BEEN AND ARE BEING TOLD ABOUT THE MAC PROGRAM AND THE FACTS OF THE MAC PROGRAM--BASED UPON OUR OWN REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE MAC REGULATIONS--ARE FREQUENTLY ENTIRELY DIFFERENT THINGS.