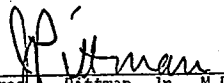


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The above remarks should also explain my position on the item (c), the need for justification by a physician for designating a more expensive product of a specific manufacturer. The question becomes, "What is a good reason?" It seems to me there is simply no practical way, even if it were deemed desirable, to remove from the physician to another member of the "health care team" or to "society at large" the ultimate responsibility and authority for answering this question, since, as indicated in the resolution, the physician is the one with the most intimate and detailed knowledge of the patient, his pathology, his life situation and circumstances, his family, and other aspects of his personality, as well as knowledge of the drug desired. Rather, the resolution simply attempts to require the physician to pause in his busy day and think consciously for a moment, each time he writes a prescription, of whether he has a "good reason" which he could give his fellow physicians if asked, for choosing the more expensive drug product. If he does not have such reasons, in my estimation he should delegate choice of the cheapest equivalent product to the pharmacist.

In making this decision, the thing most needed by the physician or the pharmacist is information -- accurate information, "reliable knowledge" -- of the actual manufacturer of the various drug products available. It seems to me that the reasonable conclusion of this whole affair might best be simply to require the distributors of drug products to designate in writing, on each bottle or package of the drug product being dispensed to the pharmacy, the actual manufacturing laboratory or unit in sufficient detail to inform the pharmacist and physician accurately as to the origin of the material. With this information and the price of the various drug products in hand, and the recommended changes in prescription forms, selection of "the best product for the lowest cost" should not be difficult.

Thank you.


James A. Pittman, Jr., M.D.