

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

SCIENTIFIC PEARL (10)

## medicine's week

## national

Drug Research Board did not intend a resolution it passed last October to be a position favoring or opposing anti-substitution drug laws, according to people who attended a DRB meeting this month in Washington, D.C. They said the DRB made it clear it believes physicians should have the responsibility for selecting drugs for their patients. A press release issued in January by the National Research Council had indicated that the DRB resolution called for changes in anti-substitution laws, and the misinterpretation was widely disseminated by the American Pharmaceutical Assn., which is seeking repeal. At this month's DRB meeting, AMA Board Chairman Richard Palmer, MD, and Trustee Jere Annis, MD, explained the AMA position opposing repeal of anti-substitution laws.

Maryland pharmacies have agreed to compromise legislation that would require pharmacies to post the prices of the 100 most commonly prescribed prescription drugs. Bill also provides for the posting of a list of services the pharmacy provides—such as delivery, patient profiles, and late hours of operation—that may lead to price differences.

Legislation calling for unified federal action and information exchange on investigations of nursing homes was introduced by Sen. Frank Church (D., Idaho) and Sen. Frank Moss (D., Utah). Resolution urges President Ford to submit a multi-agency plan that provides close surveillance of state and federal actions related to nursing home abuses, complete reporting of possible links between scandals or problems in various areas, and developing better care and cost controls.

Pennsylvania Dept. of Transportation has rejected a request by the Pennsylvania Chiropractic Society that chiropractors be authorized to perform physical examinations for driver's license applicants.

Nationwide home care course for families of multiple sclerosis patients will be developed by American Red Cross and National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Organizations will share resources and expertise in the project.

Thermography is not an adequate screening method for diagnosing breast cancer when used alone, American Thermographic Society said. So-

cisty statement said, "Thermography is a complementary diagnostic tool which is useful in the evaluation of breast disease when combined with other modalities, such as physical examination conducted by a physician or mammography performed by a radiologist."

Five hospitals have joined Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Maryland's HomeCare Program. Under the plan, hospitals provide medically necessary home health services to eligible plan members. The plans then directly reimburse the hospital. The plan is designed to cut the lengths of some hospital stays.

Based on a state regulation, a new court ruling says all mental patients admitted involuntarily to Maryland state hospitals must be represented by a lawyer at commitment hearings. All patients committed without a lawyer since Oct. 1, 1973 will get new hearings.

Missouri Supreme Court upheld the exemption from property tax of not-for-profit hospitals. The court ruled that three Kansas City, Mo., not-for-profit hospitals should retain their tax exempt status because they make treatment "available to both rich and poor." A trial court earlier had held that St. Luke's Hospital, Baptist Memorial Hospital, and Research Hospital and Medical Center should not be exempt from property taxes because they were not operated "regularly and exclusively" for "purely charitable" purposes.

Public education program by Illinois State Medical Society, Illinois Hospital Assn., and Illinois Dept. of Public Health is encouraging people who received x-ray treatment of the neck and face during the 1930s-1960s period to seek medical examinations. Patients who had such therapy are being informed of the fact that they run an increased risk of developing thyroid tumors. Similar campaigns also are under way in Detroit and Milwaukee.

Research on socioeconomic aspects of surgery will be conducted by American College of Surgeons' new Dept. of Surgical Practice. Department to be headed by James Haug, will investigate such issues as medical manpower, professional liability quality assurance, and health planning.

## world