Sale of tobacco products in pharmacies

Zellmer's editorial on smoking performs a service to the profession by calling attention to the American Medical Association House of Delegates' recently adopted policy urging pharmacists to remove tobacco products from their shelves and calling for pharmacy organizations to adopt a similar policy. However, his statement that "groups that represent community pharmacists and pharmacies need to overcome the meekness that to date has characterized their efforts to persuade drugstores to discontinue the sale of tobacco" is off the mark and unfortunately dismisses several important efforts that have taken place over more than two decades.

Although APhA commends ASHP for its decision to ask its delegates to consider a similar policy next June, it should be recognized that the APhA House of Delegates adopted a policy to discontinue tobacco sales in pharmacies nearly 20 years ago—in 1969. To implement an even earlier policy (1968), APhA over the ensuing years has provided a version of a sign for pharmacists to use to inform their patients of their policy of not selling tobacco products. Further, the growing number of members who have taken such action has been regularly pubilcized in APhA publications.

Other APhA policies on smoking have urged that the public be educated about the dangers of smoking (1964, 1968, 1970, and 1971), while another banned smoking at all APhA public meetings (1973). In addition, in January 1987 APhA's headquarters in Washington, D.C., became a smoking-free building, an action that ASHP will take next year.

APhA, in cooperation with the National Cancer Institute, is currently involved in a major public education program, "Helping Smokers Quit," that provides pharmacists with educational materials to assist their patients in smoking cessation. This program, launched in 1986 at a news conference at APhA headquarters featuring U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, soon will be expanded to include educational efforts by the 74 chapters of the APhA Academy of Students of Pharmacy.

Although the profession never should consider our collective efforts to combat smoking to be optimal until this public health hazard is totally eliminated, we nevertheless should not ignore or minimize the substantial efforts that have been made to date.


Concerns about manufacturer-mixed bulk packages

The article by Kleinberg and Duafala on manufacturer-mixed bulk antineoplastic agents provides information on an alternative to a hospital-mixed system for preparing antineoplastic-drug doses. In my opinion the conclusions reached are erroneous and misleading because of certain flaws in the analysis and evaluation. An initial discrepancy is the appellation of "manufac-