

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. RES. 99

To encourage consumers to consult with their pharmacists in connection with the purchase and use of over-the-counter drug products.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 12, 1997

Mr. DASCHLE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources

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## RESOLUTION

To encourage consumers to consult with their pharmacists in connection with the purchase and use of over-the-counter drug products.

1       *Resolved,*

2       **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

3       The Congress finds the following:

4               (1) The Food and Drug Administration has  
5       proposed that the content and format of over-the-  
6       counter (OTC) drug product labels be made more  
7       user-friendly to help consumers better understand  
8       how to properly use these medications.

9               (2) Almost 60 percent of total OTC drug prod-  
10      uct sales of \$29,000,000,000 are made by commu-

1 nity retail pharmacies, where a pharmacist is avail-  
2 able for consultation with the consumer about the  
3 product.

4 (3) A significant number of potent prescription  
5 medications have been switched to OTC status over  
6 the last few years and others are likely to be  
7 switched over in the next few years. Many consum-  
8 ers may be unaware of the potential problems that  
9 may occur when OTC and prescription drugs are in-  
10 appropriately used together, and should be encour-  
11 aged to consult with their doctor and pharmacist.  
12 The pharmacist may have the only complete record  
13 of all the medications being taken by the consumer  
14 that would help avoid these problems.

15 (4) Pharmacists can help the consumer select  
16 the most cost-effective OTC drug product based on  
17 the symptoms presented to the pharmacist.

18 (5) Interaction with the pharmacist on using  
19 OTC drug products is particularly important for  
20 older Americans, who already use one-third of all  
21 prescription drug products and one-third of OTC  
22 drug products. As the population ages, older Ameri-  
23 cans are expected to use almost half of all OTC drug  
24 products by the year 2000. According to recent stud-  
25 ies, the health care system, including the Medicaid

1       and Medicare programs, incur billions of dollars in  
 2       unnecessary costs each year as a result of medica-  
 3       tion-related problems.

4           (6) The importance of consumer interaction  
 5       with the pharmacist about OTC drug products was  
 6       recognized by Congress when it required that Medic-  
 7       aid prospective drug utilization review programs in-  
 8       clude screening for “serious interactions with non-  
 9       prescription or OTC medications”.

10          (7) Encouraging pharmacist interaction with  
 11       consumers on OTC drug products is consistent with  
 12       recent attempts by consumer groups, the pharmacy  
 13       community, and the Food and Drug Administration  
 14       to increase the quality and quantity of written and  
 15       oral information being provided to consumers with  
 16       their prescription medications.

17   **SEC. 2. CONSULTATION.**

18       It is the sense of the Senate that the Food and Drug  
 19       Administration should include a provision in the Adminis-  
 20       tration’s new final regulation on the content and format  
 21       of over-the-counter drug labels which requires that such  
 22       labels include the phrase “Consult your doctor or phar-  
 23       macist”.

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