June 10, 2000

To the FDA,

It has come to my attention that the FDA will consider reclassification of a number of medications from prescription to over-the-counter status. My concern lies with those designed for birth control and for treatment of hypertension.

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The decision to use these potent drugs should not be left in the hands of the consumer. Their side effects are numerous, and while all drugs carry the risk of adverse reaction, the incidence of these is greatly reduced when usage is controlled by medically trained personnel.

An OTC designation would warrant that a lengthy warning/caution insert accompany these chemicals. This information would be, by necessity, more technical in nature than most consumers would care to tackle; a less detailed summary would be a disservice to the consumer by providing incomplete data. With either case it would be far too easy for the buyer to view the cautions as

OON-1256 CH 64

"far-fetched." This attitude would be dangerous for them and for those around them:

You'd never know when the man passing you at 80mph would experience syncope because his BP became very low (he never went for BP checks, concluding, "I feel fine."), or the woman driving your child's school bus would suffer a CVA while on her route (her history of hypertension and smoking habit were dismissed as a gamble worth taking to avoid pregnancy). While either scenario could occur without the use of drugs, shouldn't our goal be to make our world/lives healthier and safer, not riskier?

These drugs are too dangerous and require too many controls for their usage to be left to the discretion of the general public. Please, leave these chemicals as "prescription only."

Thank-you.

Sincerely,

Rita Braun R.N.
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