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Sent: Sunday, May 06, 2001 10:31 PM
To: Titus, Sandra L
Subject: OTC Switch of Non-sedating antihistamines

I am a practicing allergist in California and hold a clinical appointment as Professor of Pediatrics, Division of Allergy and Immunology, College of Medicine, University of California at Irvine.

The proposed switch to OTC status of non-sedating antihistamines is ill founded. These compounds are safe and effective and are currently a covered benefit on most insurance plans. If these medications were available without prescription, their use would be supplanted by less expensive first generation antihistamines. There is ample literature documented impaired function with these antihistamines of which patients are unaware.

Non-sedating antihistamines are an important adjunct in treating millions of people suffering from significant allergic problems. OTC switch would engender de facto limitation of their use by increasing out of pocket costs, to the detriment of allergic patients.

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