

## **SELLING SICKNESS**

- 1.** Thirty years ago the head of one of the world's best-known drug companies made some very candid comments. Close to retirement at the time, Merck's aggressive chief executive Henry Gadsden told Fortune magazine of his distress that the company's potential markets had been limited to sick people. Suggesting he'd rather Merck be more like chewing gum maker Wrigley's, Gadsden said it had long been his dream to make drugs for healthy people. Because then, Merck would be able to "sell to everyone." Three decades on, the late Henry Gadsden's dream has come true. [Ray Moynihan and Alan Cassels Selling Sickness]
- 2.** If prescription drugs were like ordinary consumer goods, all this might not matter very much. But drugs are different . People depend on them for their health and even their lives... People need to know that there are some checks and balances on this industry, so that its quest for profits doesn't push every other consideration aside. [Dr Marcia Angell The Truth About Drug Companies]
- 3.** There is no doubt in my mind that DTC ads mislead consumers far more than they inform them, and they pressure doctors to prescribe new, expensive and often marginally helpful drugs, even when a more conservative option (including no drug) might be better and safer. Doctors don't want to alienate their patients, and too many of them find it faster and easier to write a prescription than to explain why it isn't necessary. That is why DTC ads are prohibited in every other developed country (except New Zealand). [Dr. Marcia Angell]
- 4.** In this age of globalization, it is conceivable that we in the wealthy developed world will continue to spend billions every year diagnosing and medicating children whose symptoms include "often fidgets with hands or feet" and prescribing lifelong speed to adults who "drum their fingers" when each year millions of children and adults just across our borders will die early from preventable and treatable life-threatening diseases? Surely this is one obscenity too many. [Ray Moynihan and Alan Cassels Selling Sickness]