COOPERATIVE PROGRAM ON PHARMACEUTICALS IN LATIN AMERICA

The Pan American Health Organization and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), began a cooperative program in January 1988 with the objective of providing assistance in strengthening national drug regulatory agencies and improving pharmaceutical manufacturing practices in Latin American countries in order to ensure the availability of safe and effective drugs in Central and South America. The provision of essential drugs of high quality is a major component of PAHO/WHO's primary health care strategy and is considered a key to achieving the goal of health for all by the year 2000.

Under this agreement, the FDA has provided a drug specialist to serve as a PAHO consultant for 14 months. He will assist in organizing and presenting formal training programs in Latin America on good manufacturing practices and quality assurance for pharmaceutical products and will provide technical assistance to national drug regulatory agencies. FDA and PAHO may extend the program after February 1989, based on a review of the results achieved to that time.

Prior collaboration between PAHO and the consultant from FDA resulted in the development of training materials in Spanish that were successfully used in a pilot training course held in Chile in June 1986 and a second course held in Mexico City during November–December 1987. Since the cooperative program began, a third course was held in Guatemala City, and two other courses have been scheduled for this year in Colombia (10 August to 16 September) and Costa Rica (17 October to 18 November).

The updated course material, consisting of 16 training modules, about 500 slides, 19 audiovisual programs, reference material, and a bibliography, will be used to train 400 to 500 Latin American industry and government professionals during a three-year period. PAHO will donate a duplicate set of these training materials to each participating country so that they can repeat the course or portions of it in accordance with their needs.

In addition to the one-month subregional training courses to be presented in three or four countries each year, the program provides for on-the-job training through direct technical assistance to participating countries and advanced training opportunities at U.S. pharmaceutical plants or FDA field offices.