

They'll Rate Rx Prepay Plans

New consumer group will 'evaluate' and 'accredit' all health facilities

A new type of consumerist health watchdog organization has arrived on the scene—and prescription insurance plans are among the areas that will come under its purview.

Based in New York City, the group is called Consumer Commission on the Accreditation of Health Services, Inc. It describes itself as "the nation's first consumer commission to accredit hospitals and health services".

Chairman of the organization is John McDowell, co-ordinator of social welfare projects for the National Council of Churches, President is Donald Rubin, a health insurance consultant to union-management welfare plans.

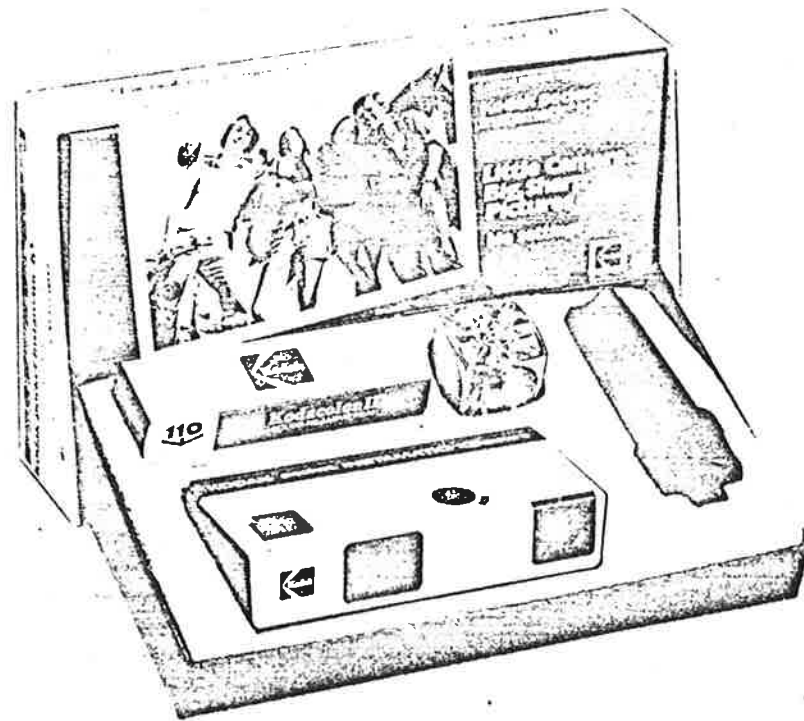
Members of the board of directors and professional advisory committee include prominent physicians and hospital executives, as well as union and consumer leaders.

Full-time operation of the commission is in the hands of Edward Gluckmann, who has a background in hospital administration.

Cost and quality: According to Mr. Gluckmann, formation of the group "represents a movement on the part of consumers and concerned health professionals in New York to provide consumers with factual data on the cost and quality of health services."

The commission will evaluate health institutions and publish its evaluations, Mr. Gluckmann said. "The commission will rate and accredit hospitals and other health services that meet clearly defined standards prepared by the commission. Our standards will be based on consumer expectation of high quality medical care."

On the list: While hospitals are first in the commission's pri-



IT'S PERSONAL: Eastman Kodak's Pocket Instamatic camera line has a new member, smaller and lower-priced than any of the others. The Pocket Instamatic 10 lists at \$22.95—or \$24.95 in a kit with film and magicube. A magicube extender is included with each camera at no extra charge. The customer gets also a sheet of nine pressure-sensitive labels decorated in a variety of styles. Any one can be pressed onto a recess on top of the camera, to "personalize" it.

Kodak disclosed that, from now on, flash extenders will be supplied at no extra charge with future shipments of all Pocket Instamatic cameras. For a limited time, the company will also offer extenders at no cost to present owners of the cameras. By increasing the distance between the flashcube and the camera lens, the extender minimizes the problem of red reflections in the subject's eyes.

orities, prescription insurance plans and various aspects of prescription writing and dispensing are on its list for "evaluation" and "accreditation".

Mr. Gluckmann told ADM the commission will evaluate prepaid Rx plans available in New York City, compare them with each other, and rate them as good, bad, or in between.

This procedure, he said, will be applied to commercial insurance plans, union and union-management plans, non-profit plans of the Blue Cross-Blue Shield type, and Medicaid.

Generically: Also in the prescription area, Mr. Gluckmann said, the commission will encourage physicians to write generically rather than by trade name.

It will also advise consumers to insist that physicians tell them about the side effects of drugs they prescribe.

ASHP Participates In 'Drug Spotlight'

The American Society of Hospital Pharmacists is participating in a new nationwide program aimed at helping hospital pharmacy and therapeutics committees improve their drug practices.

Called Drug Spotlight Program, the project is sponsored also by the American Medical Assn, American Hospital Assn, American Nurses Assn, and other groups.

Among its aims are to minimize adverse drug reactions, and to reduce the cost of drug therapy without impairing effectiveness and safety.

One part of the program will be the publication of articles on specific drug categories in journals of the participating organizations. The first category is drugs for hypertension.