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- NAACOG Committee on Education  
Lois Salmeron, RN, MSN, Chairman  
Donna Miller-Slade, RN, MSN  
Marie Hogarty, RNC, MSN  
Barbara Sinclair, RNC, MN  
Maureen Heaman, RN, MN  
Patricia Higgins, RN, PhD

### *Author's reply:*

I want to thank the six members of NAACOG's Committee on Education for responding to my article. It is a sign of a maturing profession when disagreements are made public and debated.

I mentioned a policy shift within NAACOG to illustrate the apparent lack of a critical analysis of external economic and political forces that shaped the new policy as well as the shift in underlying values. NAACOG leaders decided to take an active role in a large pharmaceutical company's (Ayerst) public relations campaign linking menopause with osteoporosis. The role consisted of accepting Ayerst money channelled through the public relations firm of Burson-Marsteller to help develop seminars for NAACOG nurses to present to the public.<sup>1</sup> In the past NAACOG had accepted grants from other drug companies but had never been funded for a consumer program. This to me is a serious and troubling policy shift.

It is hard for me to believe that leaders of NAACOG and members of this committee are unaware of the economic and political power brought to bear by gynecologists<sup>2</sup> and pharmaceutical companies<sup>3</sup> to rehabilitate estrogen therapy after it was linked to endometrial cancer in the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> It is true that progestogens are now combined with estrogen but research on the long-term effects is not yet available. Progestogens in the birth-control pill increase risk of high blood pressure, strokes, and breast cancer.

What underlying values, then, are operating when NAACOG nurses "present estrogen supplementation in a factual manner as one of the therapies"? Consumers need and want to know the debates within medicine and the social sciences over the use of hormones to prevent and treat osteoporosis.<sup>5</sup> The crisis in confidence consumers face toward medicine's overinvolvement with pharmaceutical companies can be extended to include nursing. My comments concerning NAACOG were intended as an alarm to help prevent this from happening.

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—Kathleen I. MacPherson, RN, PhD