

THE TRUSTEE

November 2018

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was formed in 1906. The FDA reviews and grants approval for the availability of drugs in the marketplace and they are charged with monitoring the product post launch. They are to act as a watchdog of product marketing, such as labeling of uses, side effects, and warnings. They are unconcerned with price. Their current budget is \$2.1b.

The U.S. Congress has the duty to oversee the financials of the industry. For the past 25 years, they have accepted contributions from the industry while sitting on their hands in allowing drug prices to spiral out of control. And, our representatives in our republic have failed in overseeing agencies like the FDA. Opioids were allowed to flourish as the bottom line was protected. Now, executive orders to address the opioid crisis are not supported by adequate structure, necessary funding, or penalties for the industry. It's a travesty.

The FDA has now approved a new pain drug, Dsuvia, that is 10X stronger than fentanyl. It will be administered as a tablet with a single use applicator, can't be used for more than 72 hours, and is not available for home use. The FDA insists it will be available to and used only in institutional settings. It appears the impetus for approval came from the Department of Defense that expressed the need to efficiently administer a stronger drug on the battlefield. For all of the opioids that have been marketed in the last 10 years, the FDA has not sufficiently demonstrated drug safety, post-marketing assessment of who is taking the drug or how often prescribing is inappropriate, and whether there was ever a reason to risk the health of the general population by having one more lethal opioid on the market. The FDA doesn't seem to understand the optics or the public health issues that are impacting our country where the Centers for Disease Control states 115 Americans die of an opioid overdose every day. And, for Congress, a new synthetic street opioid, Carfentanil, 100X stronger than fentanyl, has no pharma \$, but needs your prompt attention.

NATIONAL CAREGIVERS MONTH

November is the annual National Caregivers Month that celebrates the work of and raises an awareness of the work of family caregivers. In our country, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates there are over 40 million caregivers who provide unpaid eldercare for relatives and friends. The AARP estimates the work value at \$470 billion.

Caregivers come in many forms. Some provide housework, run errands, provide security, companionship, or medical support. Some much needed appreciation for their services is welcomed and needed.

Check on a caregiver's state of mind. Ask them if they need anything or if there is something you can do to assist them. Even a short conversation may be appreciated and break up some of their time. Offer to take over their duties so they can take a break. You can prepare some food for them, bring them something to read, or bring them a plant or flowers. Be specific and avoid being vague in

your offers of support. Walk the walk! And, anything to break the routine and to brighten their day will make a difference.

Check on the caregiver's health. Look for signs of stress, exhaustion, or fatigue. See if they are maintaining their weight, sleeping well, and not suffering any daily maladies, such as recurring headaches. Pay attention as we want to avoid the caregiver becoming a person in need of personal care or therapy.

Bring them a movie, some music, or suggest some specific exercise. Crosswords, jumbles, and Sudoku can exercise the mind and make the time pass. Take care of our caregivers.

SCAMS: HANG UP!

If you ever receive a phone call asking for money or personal information, hang up! Anyone posing as an official representative of the government is a fraud. Government agencies, like the IRS, will never contact you by phone. Hang up! Never provide credit card or bank information to strangers. Hang up! Free cruises, reduced credit card costs, locked bank accounts, unpaid taxes or bills where services will be cut. All scams. Hang up!

IN MEMORIAM: Lorraine Hutton