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Lawmakers Asked to Dignify Disease's Cause

HEART disease is rated as America's most deadly ailment, and medical science has concentrated research efforts toward finding ways of prevention and cure, with notable successes.

Cancer is next, and although the exact cause has not been isolated and identified, the government restricts use of DES as a feed additive to cause cattle to gain more rapidly and requires warning labels on cigarettes because they are suspected of being a cause of lung cancer.

Alcoholism is the nation's third most deadly disease. Only 10 per cent of its victims recover, and there are now more than 9 million alcoholics, with the number increasing by 3 per cent annually.

The cause of alcoholism has been

fully identified and use of known prevention methods are 100 per cent effective, even though the cures are not always reliable.

Powerful, influential, well-financed forces are continually pushing politically, commercially and socially to have liquor laws made less restrictive and drinking more "attractive."

The Oklahoma legislature will be called upon to make another decision when a bill intended to legalize liquor-by-the-drink comes up for consideration.

The question is not whether those already addicted to alcohol or those who drink socially or for business reasons are able to get liquor. It is available now, and it is widely known that many so-called "private

clubs" serve liquor in illegal manners. The question is whether additional open bars will be legalized to offer for sale the alcoholic beverages that are the cause of the nation's third worst disease.

Alcoholism has become a major problem in business and industry. Many executives serve liquor in their offices and then complain because employees show up for work with hangovers.

It's not that business condones drunkenness. Generally, it does not, but it suffers costs of management errors, loss of production, and fringe benefits paid to employees who drink.

The proposed legislation will be opposed actively by the Sooner Alco-

hol-Narcotic Education (SANE), an organization that is financed (under-financed might be a better word) by citizens who believe that the state would be better off without habit-forming liquor and drugs.

The disease of alcoholism is personal, but its effects are public. Drinking drivers are deadly hazards, involved in a reported 50 per cent of all traffic fatalities. Alcoholism ruins the health of its victims, and destroys careers, causes businesses to fail, wrecks numerous marriages, and deprives many children of needed care.

Yet the legislature is being asked again to dignify the cause of this disease by making it more readily available so that its makers and sellers may profit.