

THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EXCHANGE OF PERSONS

January 28-31, 1959, Washington, D. C.

Report of Workshop #I - 10: MEDICINE AND HEALTH

Chairman:

Robert A. Moore, M.D.
President, Downstate Medical Center,
State University of New York

Rapporteur:

Miss Ruth M. Martin
Assistant Executive Secretary,
American Nurses Association

With the increased emphasis on the need of health care for the peoples of the world, the exchange of health personnel for education and training becomes more and more challenging.

The panel on Medicine and Health approached the problem areas confronted by those responsible for exchanges in the various health fields here in the United States with a view to exploring ideas for the improvement of existing programs.

Although the health professions have common problems in the exchange of personnel, each profession has distinctive problems or variants of the common problems. In all professions there are many levels of possible exchange, such as preprofessional education, professional education, postprofessional education and training, research training, and observation of educational methods. Thus personnel from the level of the high school graduate to the dean of the professional school are involved. Finally, there is, of course, the foreign-trained professional worker, who wishes to immigrate permanently to the United States, either voluntarily or as a refugee.

In the matter of selecting prospective candidates from other countries for pre-medical or medical education in the United States it was pointed out that the immediate need for educational expansion in medicine in this country requires that we be continually more selective. It therefore seems logical to give preference to those individuals who plan to make a contribution to education in their own countries and can be expected to fulfill this obligation. The screening and selection of candidates is best accomplished between institutions rather than between an individual and some institution of his or her own choice.

Beyond the medical school level there are twice as many internships available in the United States as there are potential interns to fill these

vacancies. Because of this, there are considerable discrepancies in the training programs for foreign doctors. Hospitals which have difficulty in filling intern quotas tend to pay higher stipends in an effort to solve their recruitment problems. These circumstances combined tend to attract foreign doctors to hospitals in which training programs are not good. In helping to solve this problem the institutions with the best training programs in the United States must be continually encouraged to assume reasonable responsibility for the training of well qualified foreign doctors. For those who are not sufficiently prepared on arrival to benefit from postgraduate training, we should consider establishing a special course of study in some of the educational institutions in this country similar to those at Pennsylvania and New York University.

Regarding the newly established Educational Council for Foreign Medical Graduates which has introduced a qualifying examination for doctors seeking internship and residency training in the United States, it is possible that a type of counselling service might be established for the benefit of those persons who have passed the examination. This service could minimize misunderstandings and disillusionments.

The work of the National Committee for Resettlement of Foreign Physicians has been invaluable in its assistance to the foreign doctor seeking to establish himself as a qualified physician to practice in the United States.

A beginning study concerning international exchanges of dental students and dental school faculty indicates that such exchanges have every chance of success if sufficient attention is given to the selection and orientation of our visitors.

Veterinary medicine has made only a small beginning.

The American Nurse's Association stressed the need to continually orient, educate and inform nurses who come to the United States for further training as well as hospital and public health personnel where these nurses receive their training. This kind of effort on the part of persons responsible for placement of exchange nurses is necessary to the understanding of the purposes of the program.

It is best to base future plans for training health personnel on maintaining high professional standards in the United States and directing our attention toward further improving educational opportunities in the health field in other countries.