THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE TO CHILDREN

The delivery of health care has become one of the most talked about subjects in medical circles in recent years. Governmental agencies, labor groups, insurance companies, and consumer groups also have become concerned about it. The Brookings Institution began a short series of public policy conferences for physicians in the fall of 1967, their first venture into the field of health. The delivery of care has been discussed from many standpoints in all of them.

Within the Academy we have become increasingly aware of the shortcomings of our present "system" of medical practice as it relates to children. It is not that the system is altogether bad. It seems that primarily there are too few pediatricians and family physicians and the ones available are not well distributed.

Certain aspects of the investigation of the problems of practice have been and are being studied by the Council on Pediatric Practice, which has been in existence since 1964. The urgency and necessity of doing even more was pointed out in the spring of 1967 by the report of an ad hoc committee of the Executive Board, the chairman of which was Dr. John MacQueen.

This then led to the appointment of an ad hoc committee of the Academy to study means of approaching this complex problem. This committee recommended a detailed investigation which would require the services of a chairman who was experienced and who could devote at least one half of his time to it. Dr. Carl Fischer of Philadelphia was selected for this position. Dr. Fischer is a former president of the Academy, has been in the private practice of medicine, has been chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at Hahnemann Medical School, and currently is serving as chairman of the Council of Pediatric Practice.

The Executive Board has charged the ad hoc committee to seek opinions, compile material, and reach some firm conclusions on which recommendations for action can be based.

The committee decided and secured Executive Board approval to hold "grass root" district meetings in order to garner opinions, ideas, and facts about practice from our members in various parts of the United States. The Mead Johnson Company has provided financial aid for these meetings. The first one was held in Swampscott, Massachusetts, on September 27 and 28, and the second was held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on November 1 and 2. Others will be held throughout 1969, the last one to take place in January 1970. By means of plenary and workshop sessions, and with the participating help of all interested fellows in the district, we hope that better ways can be found to deliver quality health care to children throughout our nation—yet preserving all of the good of our present ways.

Dr. Fischer and his committee will also welcome additional ideas or suggestions by letter, telephone, or personal visit. This, then, is a project for the entire Academy, which can be successful only if everyone participates. It is not to be change for change's sake, and it is not to be a rumination of outdated methodology. We want neither excessive zeal for the new nor excessive contempt for the old. We are not looking for, nor do we want, monolithic direction as a substitute for present methods of delivery. The sole objective is to find ways which are practical to improve the delivery of better health care to all of the children of the United States.
THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: ACADEMY STUDY OF THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE TO CHILDREN
George B. Logan
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