

Editorial Comment

"No two people are alike . . . and both are glad of it!"
Anonymous

Just as no two people are alike, no two professions or no two societies are alike in the area of allied medical occupations, as elsewhere. But many people feel — the AMA, for example — that we should not concentrate on our differences so much as we should emphasize our similarities.

The question they ask is basic: "Is it necessary for each profession to develop unilaterally, or can they capitalize on their similarities by evolving a multi-professional discipline that can maximize the lateral movement from one speciality area to another according to one's personal needs or the needs of the professions?"

Obviously, there is much that can be shared. The basic sciences and the basic principles of medicine apply to all. The desire to take better care, increasingly better care of the patient and the principles of ethical conduct are also basic to all. With this in mind, could an educational program to be developed with a strong primary effort in these basic principles of science, medicine, ethics, and patient care with an equally strong secondary effort in each of the speciality areas of allied health sciences?

This may be what the AMA had in mind in their "Guidelines for Development of New Health Occupations", adopted in December 1969, which states, under Section VI, A.: "Mobility within a discipline and between disciplines should be provided for. Two avenues for advancement in responsibility should be open: 1) Advancement through practical experience and attainment of a high level of competence, and 2) Academic achievement building on a foundation of previous educational attainment."

A practical program might consist of educational institutions caring for the larger groups and their basic orientation to allied health with secondary specialized training of the smaller subgroups at other institutions. An individual desiring to move from one specialty area to another need only take advantage of the secondary training offered in the new field. In addition, the evolution of a new specialty area would require the development of a new secondary program rather than an entirely new total program.

We tend to astutely peer down noses at those engaged in other areas, or even at those belonging to other societies. Yet, if we could work together, we could develop a highly efficient educational program geared to the needs of medicine and fulfill the desires of those whose temperaments, talents, and abilities are so inclined. To develop a program in which an individual can mold himself, like a lump of clay, into what he himself wants to be would be most gratifying an endeavor to us all.

Of whom do we speak when we say "all"? We speak, of course, of those in our Society, of those in dialysis, oxygenation, hemodynamics, and organs and tissues. But, more, we speak of AmSECT. Cardiopulmonary Technicians, Dialysis Personnel, Physicians Assistants and whatever other societies the emergent professions may engender. We speak, then, of a national federation of societies for allied medical professions. The pure potency of such an organization in developing the capabilities that exist for the improved care of the patient is staggering to the imagination.

Of course there are other dividends for the individual in the important area of the dissemination of information. Such inter-society cooperation could, and would, result in bigger and better annual conferences as well as bigger, better and more frequent Journals. To have every facet of not only the Technology but the entire field of allied medicine available to us consistently and in a professional manner in a professional environment is a fitting adjunct to the total educational program outlined above.

The previous administration attempted to lay the groundwork for such inter-society cooperation and, no doubt, the new administration will continue in this endeavor. It should be understood, of course, that the development of a total educational program and a federation of societies would in no way endanger the autonomy of the individual society to pursue its own goals and define its own purpose. The concept is to cooperate to the utmost where we are alike so that we can better proceed efficiently in the areas where we differ. The patient can only benefit, and *that* is the whole ball of wax!

Ed Berger