

As I View It From Washington

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National Affairs Editor
Washington, D.C.

THE NATIONAL HEART, LUNG, AND BLOOD ACT WAS RENEWED when Congress passed an "omnibus" health package aimed at extending a number of expiring health programs. Approved by the House Commerce Committee on March 17, passed by the full House on March 31 and by the Senate in early May, the legislation extends a number of vital health programs due to terminate in just a few weeks, at the end of this fiscal year. The health programs were extended for only one year, however, instead of the usual three to five years. This was for the purpose of allowing the Carter Administration time to determine and develop its own health priorities and directions. The House Commerce Committee threw out an amendment which would have required funding review for Heart, Lung, and Blood Centers every three years instead of every five years.

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VA CARDIAC CATH LABS ARE UNDERUSED AND MISPLACED according to a recent General Accounting Office report. The GAO report stated that although there are 12 laboratories, some are located at hospitals where comparatively little cardiovascular surgery is performed, whereas 8 hospitals which do more cardiovascular surgery have no lab facilities. The GAO concluded that "The Veterans Administration may be exposing its patients to unnecessary risks by performing cardiac catheterization in hospitals without facilities to handle the emergencies." Copies of the GAO report are available while they last from the General Accounting Office, Room 4522, 441 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20548. Copies are \$1 each, free for non-profit groups.

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DIET AND CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE ARE IN THE HEADLINES as part of a report on *Dietary Goals for the United States*, prepared by Senator McGovern's Select Senate Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. The Committee has been holding a series of public hearings in diet and disease, covering such topics as diet and cardiovascular disease, obesity, beef consumption, the role of fiber in the human diet. *Dietary Goals* may be obtained from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. The price is 95¢ a copy.

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THE THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL WAS HELD in Washington, D.C. in mid-April. Congressman Charles Rangel (D—New York) in giving the Keynote Address stated the necessity of a coordinated effort to control high blood pressure. "No one can do it alone," he said. "It will take the coordinated efforts of Congress, State, and local governments, medical practitioners, and the public to get the job done." Nothing new there, but it did bear repeating for those who think that they have a monopoly on the national hypertension control effort.

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CARDIAC SCANNING WITH RADIOACTIVE TRACERS IS BEING STUDIED by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. The new method is under intensive investigation as a means of studying cardiac function under load without the use of catheterization. Advantages include working with patients during periods of exercise and, of course, the elimination of the cath procedure which some patients tolerate poorly.

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"UNNECESSARY" SURGERY IS HOT in Washington, including "unnecessary" cardiac surgery, with Congress and Medicos hurling charges back and forth at one another with regularity. The battle promises to liven up the usual Summer doldrums in the Nation's Capital. Congress is accusing doctors of being money-hungry mercenaries who perform surgery in proportion to the number of surgeons available. Doctors say that Congress thinks only in cost-effectiveness terms, isn't really interested in human welfare or the quality of life. Public hearings before several committee of Congress are trying to determine where the truth lies.

The American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion
announces the 1978 examination
for

Certification in Cardiovascular Perfusion

ORAL—Monday, February 27, 1978

WRITTEN—Tuesday, February 28, 1978

Town and Country Hotel, San Diego, California

APPLICATION DEADLINE

November 15, 1977

For information and application write:
American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion
5934 Hornwood
Houston, Texas 77081