

directing council



PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
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XI Meeting

regional committee

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(Document presented by the Delegation of Mexico)

Background

The ever-increasing need to expand public health and medical care services to reach the largest number of communities in Mexico has made it evident that work programs cannot be carried out unless trained personnel are available in sufficient numbers. Every phase of this general fact can be applied particularly to nursing programs.

In Mexico there are official and private schools where proper teaching, preparation, education, and training can be given in the field of nursing. Governmental agencies are promoting and establishing schools of this type in ever-increasing numbers; however, the effort of federal authorities, local governments, and private enterprise cannot solve the problem, although hundreds of nurses graduate every year.

While the situation is difficult in urban sections, it is even more serious in rural areas.

In an attempt to reach a partial solution to this problem, the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare studied the matter and decided that some of its bureaus that were in a position to do so should organize short-term courses. These would consist of selected and clearly presented theoretical-practical minimum programs that would make it possible to train enthusiastic persons in a short time to do the work of nursing auxiliaries.

This plan is to be carried out preferably in rural areas where qualified persons will be selected to be trained and to return to work in their own environment. Thus, trained persons will return to their communities and homes with a knowledge of the fundamental principles of

a basic and elementary education in preventive and curative medicine. In addition, they will promote more far-reaching work and studies in their communities.

From the implementation of this program, it has been observed that it is possible to promote the training of a greater number of nursing auxiliaries; that the interest and enthusiasm derived therefrom and maintained lead to beneficial activities; and that the improvement of living conditions in the communities continues at a slow but steady pace.

Nursing auxiliaries so trained are utilized in clinics and rural health centers, small maternity hospitals, and maternal and child health offices in rural areas.

Selection of personnel

Selection is made in accordance with minimum requirements and with a view to the greatest possible utilization of that personnel. The requirements are:

a) That candidates be capable of assuming moral and material responsibility in the activities entrusted to them by society, particularly with respect to their home communities and to the agency of the Ministry of Health and Welfare that will use their services.

b) That the higher health authorities establish an adequate description of the role to be played by auxiliary nurses in the implementation of official programs of preventive or curative medicine.

c) That isolated communities learn that the nursing auxiliary can and should carry out, according to her training, only certain programs and furnish only a certain kind of assistance. However, she should not be placed in a position where she would be required to give medical and surgical aid in emergencies, perform obstetrical services, or give medical care of any other kind than the limited though necessary services that she can perform.

d) That the professional responsibility and the requirements of altruism and respect for medicine and her profession be established.

Requirements for the acceptance of a student to the training course

The fundamental requirements are the following:

- a) To have completed at least six years of elementary education.
- b) To enjoy good physical and mental health.

- c) To show interest in learning and in serving society.
- d) To be 15-25 years of age.
- e) To have good moral character.
- f) To have the authorization of her parents, if she is a minor.

In places where there are no elementary schools, only items b), c), d), e), and f) will be taken into consideration in selecting students.

Program and Faculty

The typical program for these nursing auxiliary courses is attached, although when deemed advisable, changes that do not affect substance are made to give it flexibility in application.

Technical personnel from the appropriate services, ranging from epidemiologists to public health nurses, are used to provide this training, and all material and human resources are combined so as to obtain the best result from this educational program.

Immediate and longer-range objectives

The training of nursing auxiliaries conforms to the definition of the WHO Expert Committee on Nursing Education.

Two benefits or results are obtained from these programs that Mexico is carrying out within its services:

a) An immediate result: to meet the health and medical care needs in rural centers lacking such services, with a minimum guarantee for the community concerned; and

b) A longer-range result: to start replacing the empirical nursing auxiliary with trained personnel, even though the training is not as extensive and detailed as that which present-day scientific progress requires. The results obtained so far prove that Mexico's effort, as outlined above, is good for those who receive the benefits of assistance and for the state, which is thus able to extend the radius of action of its programs of preventive and curative medicine.

To these reasons, which in themselves justify the educational effort of the schools for nursing auxiliaries, is added a related social factor: the bond of affection and mutual respect that develops among the students, on the one hand, and on the other, between professors and students, which is always advantageous for the community.

Summary

Experience in Mexico has shown that with respect to nursing auxiliaries, schools should be established for their education and training whenever possible, as a basis for our public health and medical care programs.

Since it is the governments themselves that are primarily interested in having sufficient personnel to carry out their public health programs, it is incumbent upon them to sponsor and help to the utmost the establishment of schools for nursing auxiliaries in all the countries in our Hemisphere.