

directing council



PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

XII Meeting

Havana, Cuba
August 1960

regional committee

WORLD
HEALTH
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XII Meeting

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Topic 24: EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FOR HEALTH PERSONNEL IN THE AMERICAS

Adequate professional education is one of the basic requisites for the progressive improvement of health services in the Americas. The Director, in presenting his 1958 Annual Report to the Directing Council, called attention to the governments' increasing requests for collaboration in the training of physicians, sanitary and industrial engineers, nurses, dentists, and other public health workers, as well as specialists in related fields.

For the purpose of analyzing the problem as a whole, reviewing the Organization's present programs, and formulating suitable recommendations, the Director convened a Special Advisory Committee composed of experts in various branches of professional education.

The Advisory Committee made a detailed study of the present situation and its future implications, taking into account the acceleration of population growth in Latin America, as compared with the rest of the world. In its report, the Committee laid emphasis on the need for improving the training of professionals and auxiliary workers, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in order to equip them to better fulfill the responsibilities assigned them by society.

The problem of professional education in all fields of individual and collective medicine is of a magnitude that requires efforts and investments even greater than those made heretofore. As was made evident by the data summarized in the Bureau's publication "Health in the Americas and the Pan American Health Organization," no country has an adequate supply of physicians, engineers, nurses, and allied technical and auxiliary personnel for rapidly expanding health and medical programs.

The Advisory Committee fully agreed that the present situation, as reflected in the documents presented to it for study, is one of great need. It believed, also, that the approach to the problem should not be limited to the above-mentioned categories of technical personnel, but should include also other public health workers such as statisticians, nutritionists,

veterinarians, health educators, and hospital administrators. The approach taken by the Pan American Health Organization, if planned on a sufficiently broad scale, would seem appropriate for solving the problem on a gradual basis, as the essential resources become available.

Special emphasis was laid on the importance of assigning to education and training the full priority demanded by present-day conditions in the Americas, a purpose which makes it absolutely necessary that the Bureau plan an expansion of its activities in the various branches of education for professionals and for auxiliary workers. With this aim in view, and considering not only the limitations as to increases in the Organization's general budget, but also the urgency of the undertaking, other sources should be sought, such as private foundations, in order to obtain the necessary funds.

After a careful examination of the Committee's recommendations, and of the possibilities of carrying them out, the Bureau has been compiling all the information required to take suitable measures for the establishment of a Special Education Fund, with the goal of meeting the requests of the Member Governments in this fundamental aspect of its work program. The Governing Bodies of the Organization will be informed, in due course, of the results of these efforts.