

still others devote their time exclusively to contact lens patients. In its 10-year history, the center's group practice has served the community in a wide range of vision needs and, I will add, has provided care for people who might otherwise have been unable to obtain the services.

The bill you are now considering, H.R. 9256, is an excellent one which demonstrates that there is and should be public concern, encouragement, and financial means to foster more group health practices. I must add immediately, however, that the bill in its present form omits the profession of optometry.

Optometrists should be allowed to care for the vision needs of the country in a group practice on the same footing with physicians and dentists. The American people need and indeed depend on the care optometrists provide. As a matter of record, optometrists render more than 70 percent of the vision care in this country.

The administration's war on poverty, particularly as it relates to school dropouts and preschool children (Project Headstart), has need of group practice facilities such as are contemplated by H.R. 9256. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of vision in this age of high speeds, intercontinental ballistic missiles, supersonic aircraft, and electronic computers. You know also the demands on your own eyes and those of your staff because of the vast amount of required reading.

To deny optometrists the opportunity to participate in group practice is to divert from the mainstream of vital health services the optometric vision care which the American people need and upon which they depend.

On behalf of your constituents who are served by the optometric profession, I strongly urge that in reporting this bill you incorporate the 15 amendments which are attached. These amendments have but a single purpose; namely, to include optometry in the provisions of the bill. Our profession is an important segment of the health community. In the interest of the public's visual welfare its services should be eligible to participate in the growing area of group practice. If optometry is not specifically mentioned along with medicine and dentistry, it will be ineligible to participate.

Mr. Chairman, there is attached to this statement a paper which was written by me in 1960 entitled "An Examination of Group Practice in the Administration of Health Services." This monograph was the outgrowth of the thesis prepared for my master's degree. I will leave it with you for your information.

Permit me to express on behalf of the optometric profession our appreciation for this opportunity to state our position.

Mr. McCracken and I will be pleased to answer any questions you desire to ask.

(The amendments and the monograph referred to follow:)