

Mr. BARRETT. Thank you, Dr. Haffner.

I just want to ask you this question for the record.

Your testimony will indicate to me that you are for H.R. 9256?

Dr. HAFFNER. That is correct.

Mr. BARRETT. The only fault you find with the bill is that optometrists are not included in it?

Dr. HAFFNER. That's right.

Mr. BARRETT. This is your main reason for appearing here this morning?

Dr. HAFFNER. That's right.

Mr. BARRETT. I am quite sure the committee will give this consideration and the time will come when we will be marking up the bill and I am quite sure your very fine representative from the Bronx will be heard on this subject.

Dr. HAFFNER. I might, if I may, Mr. Chairman, add one additional word.

Our Optometric Center in New York, which is a member of the Group Health Association of America and which I cited in the testimony, ultimately will evolve into a new college of optometry, most probably at the City University of New York. This new institution certainly will be oriented toward the growth and development of group practice among optometrists as well as with optometrists and comprehensive health care facilities, with physicians, dentists, and other health practitioners.

We believe that this represents the need of the future and certainly this will be an integral part of the teaching program. Surely we would want to see optometry included in this bill, and not to include, we feel would be a serious error.

Mr. BARRETT. Mrs. Dwyer?

Mrs. DWYER. If this bill is passed and optometrists are included, I would like to know what the facilities cost of optometry in a clinic such as this bill envisions—what the cost would be? I realize of course it will vary throughout the country. But about what will it average—what will be the average range?

Dr. HAFFNER. We suggested there were five optometrists participating in a single discipline group and we would estimate the cost to be approximately \$50,000. Where five optometrists participate in the comprehensive health care facility that portion of the facility would be \$50,000. It would enable a broad spectrum of services to be rendered within the specialty areas of optometry.

Mr. DWYER. Mr. Haffner, what can we anticipate in the way of assistance? What would you envision this to be?

Dr. HAFFNER. We have estimated that the numbers of optometrists presently in practice in the country who are in one phase or another of group practice constitutes almost 18 percent. We believe that's a rather large figure. Optometrists have been socially oriented in terms of operating together. I suspect that the bill would act as a further encouragement to the establishment of group practices, far beyond the 18 percent. I also suspect that the bill would do another thing. It would permit those groups already in existence to broaden their services to make their services more comprehensive within the area within which they practice. So I think it would have two effects.

As to a figure, I really don't think I am prepared at this time to give you a figure, although the point is interesting.