

3. History

In March 1964, President Johnson appointed a Commission on Heart Disease, Cancer, and Stroke chaired by Michael E. DeBakey, M.D. The Commission was to recommend practical steps to reduce the heavy toll exacted by these diseases through the development of new scientific knowledge and through the delivery, to all of our citizens, of the medical knowledge we now possess. During the following months, the Commission heard testimony from scores of leaders in medicine and public affairs, and it was the overwhelming conviction of the Commission that something could and must be done to alleviate the suffering and death occasioned by heart disease, cancer, and stroke. The major innovative thrust of the Commission's first three recommendations is embodied in the regional medical programs concept in Public Law 89-239.

4. Level of operations

The legislation which authorizes the regional medical program, Public Law 89-239, was signed into law on October 6, 1965, and funds have just been appropriated for this purpose. The National Advisory Council on Regional Medical Programs has not yet been appointed, and regulations have not yet been established, nor applications prepared. Therefore, very little information is available concerning the level of operations of this new program.

(Also see table 7 at the end of the NIH section.)

5. Estimated magnitude of program in 1970

Not answered.

6. Prospective changes in program orientation

Not answered.

7. Coordination and cooperation

The concept of the regional medical programs provides a unique opportunity for coordination and cooperation within the National Institutes of Health, within the Public Health Service, within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, with other Federal agencies, and with nonprofit institutions and agencies throughout the Nation. The authorizing legislation (Public Law 89-239) specifically requires "coordination of programs assisted under this title with programs for training, research, and demonstrations relating to the same diseases assisted or authorized under other titles of this act or other acts of Congress." Regulations covering this coordination are now being prepared.

(a) Within the National Institutes of Health, there are clear opportunities for coordination of the development of regional medical programs with the existing programs of the National Heart Institute, the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness, and the National Institute of General Medical Sciences which relate directly to the three disease groups, heart disease, cancer, and stroke. An important new program such as this one is of obvious relevance to all of the programs at the National Institutes of Health. Therefore, in the early phases of this program, meetings have been held with the Institutes to convey generally the progress being made in the development of program guidelines and regulations and in the administration and staffing of a new kind of endeavor for