

Most persons examined at the center so far have been beneficiaries under the Manpower Development and Training Act. This is one of the key programs of the War on Poverty which takes unemployed heads of households and retrains them for profitable employment.

Mericle said all area health practitioners and recognized agencies may refer patients to the center.

He said most of its patients come under the category of medical indigents and receive all services without charge. They may or may not pay small admission and prescription fees.

The clinic will not accept unreferral patients, but counsel on obtaining necessary referral can be obtained by calling offices of the Health and Welfare Council of the National Capital Area, at DEcatur 2-7330, or the center itself at 628-8053.

Dr. BERLIN. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am Dr. Marvin Berlin, an optometrist practicing in the District, representing the Optometric Society of the District of Columbia of which I am President. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of revisions in the District of Columbia Optometry licensing law.

Accompanying me is Dr. Evart Warren, also a practicing optometrist here in Washington.

On my left I have Dr. Robert Corns from Indiana, Legal Administrative Assistant to the AOA Committee, and next to him is Mr. William MacCracken, who is counsel for the District of Columbia Optometric Association.

This is a summary of my full testimony, and with the permission of the Chairman, I would like to present my full statement for the record.

As Immediate Past Secretary, District of Columbia Board of Examiners in Optometry, Dr. Warren agreed to join me should the committee have questions dealing with optometry licensing and any difficulties experienced by the Board in enforcing the practice of optometry in the District.

The Optometric Society of the District of Columbia estimates that today there are 67 full-time practicing optometrists here in Washington for a population, according to the 1960 Census, of 763,956. In 1924 when the Optometry Licensing Act became law, 92 optometrists registered under the law—92 optometrists for approximately 437,571 people, the 1920 Census figure. During a 40-year period, there are 27 percent fewer optometrists and 57 percent more people.

The primary reason why the nation's capital fails to attract recent optometry school graduates is the poor environment for professional practice. Rather than lower his standards, the young optometrist establishes his practice outside the District of Columbia.

It seems to me a sad situation when only two optometrists under the age of 35, the draft age for optometrists, practice optometry in the District today. The outdated optometry law affords little inducement to practice here.

This past July, the District of Columbia Court of Appeals upheld a conviction of practicing optometry without a license in a case relating to adaptation and fitting of contact lenses. Attachment No. 1 filed with this statement gives you some indication of popular feeling about this case, in the form of a letter to the editor of the Washington Daily News.

In 1964 the Senate's Special Committee on Aging—after investigating frauds and deceptions affecting the elderly—recommended that