

Under Title XVIII routine eye examinations and glasses are expressly excluded from the benefits provided by the law. Senator Ribicoff has introduced a Bill this session which would eliminate this discrimination without expanding the benefits.

The Military Services require a cyclopegic eye examination for applicants for Cadet Flight Training. This requires patients of optometrists to go to an M.D. for the eye examination or the optometrist must arrange for an M.D. to administer the cyclopegic and allow the optometrist to complete the examination. This requirement is unscientific, unrealistic, unnecessary and discriminatory.

The Federal Aeronautics Administration regulations have been the source of considerable negotiations both in person and by correspondence covering certification by optometrists of the pilots' visual capabilities. FAA in Washington accepts reports from optometrists, but medical examiners in the field frequently interpose difficulties which result in the applicant being required to have his eyes examined by a physician to secure license renewal.

Within the last 18 months the Public Health Service appointed the first commissioned optometrist. There is a great need for many more optometrists in that service.

There is a marked tendency on the part of those in the Federal Government when they prepare copy for publications dealing with the eye or with vision, to do one of two things: either, to ignore optometry completely, or, to compare the services of optometrists to those of ophthalmologists ridiculing optometry in the process. We must be constantly on the lookout to try to forestall the issuance of such discriminatory and unfair publications.

There can be no question that there has been an awful lot of discrimination against optometry at the national level. Part of it is due to lack of information and part is due to prejudice stemming from professional jealousy. It will apparently continue until better interprofessional relations are achieved and Government officials are better informed.

Dr. McCrary. We are not convinced of the necessity for establishing an Eye Institute. We find that some of the primary arguments put forth by proponents of the legislation rest, to say the least, on a very shaky foundation of information and statistics which could well be misleading.

Proponents of this legislation state that there is an alarming increase of blindness in the United States and that there exists a dearth of research effort directed toward the prevention of blindness, disease detection, and control. I should like to deal with these two points separately.

First, as to the supposed "alarming increase in blindness," I call your attention to attachment 2, a table showing the combined payments of Federal and State funds to persons qualifying for aid to the blind.

(The table referred to follows:)

ATTACHMENT NO. 2—TOTAL STATE AND FEDERAL PAYMENTS MADE UNDER AID TO THE BLIND PROGRAM, 1955-65

Fiscal year	Total paid	Total recipients	Total population	Percent of total population
1964-65				
1963-64	\$98,898,000	94,576	192,119,000	0.049
1962-63	96,665,000	96,438	189,417,000	.050
1961-62	95,001,000	97,793	186,656,000	.052
1960-61	92,819,000	99,580	183,756,000	.054
1959-60	93,991,000	103,422	180,684,000	.057
1958-59	92,309,000	107,556	177,830,000	.060
1957-58	89,066,000	109,062	174,882,000	.062
1956-57	85,397,000	109,844	171,984,000	.063
1955-56	80,610,000	108,431	168,903,000	.064
	73,064,000	107,483	165,931,000	.064

Source: Public Information Office, Bureau of Family Services, Welfare Administration, HEW, July 13, 1967.