

might be achieved. Rapid technological advances in many fields have accentuated the present shortage of sufficiently skilled personnel. This is particularly true in such medical specialties as radiology, pathology, anesthesiology and psychiatry.

The VA has developed an outstanding professional environment by making available opportunities for performance at the highest professional level and for continued participation in research and education. This has helped to improve its competitive position. However, VA salary levels, fixed by law, are below those in the private sector. If the VA is to continue to attract and retain physicians, nurses, lawyers, physical and social scientists and other skilled technicians with high capabilities, the Agency must be able to offer them salaries set at levels which more closely approximate those available elsewhere.

Accordingly, the Commission recommends that salaries for VA personnel be raised to, and maintained at, levels which will enable the VA to recruit and retain in competition with other demands for these scarce category personnel.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 55

The Commission recommends expansion of the Veterans Administration program of training medical and paramedical personnel.

Background to Recommendation:

The Commission shares the general concern of the nation over the growing national shortage of health service manpower, but it is particularly concerned, because the VA must compete for, attract, and retain a significant segment of the total health manpower supply available in the nation in order to maintain its medical program for veterans. Failure to maintain its competitive position in the face of ever-increasing demands on the supply of available medical manpower could result in the gradual deterioration of the health care provided to veterans.

The shortage of health service manpower is considered acute today. It is expected to become even more serious in the immediate future. In his 1967 Health and Education Message, the President, Lyndon B. Johnson, stated: