

other factors which occurred in 1964 and 1965.

One of these factors was the creation of a national biomedical research effort unprecedented in history and unequalled anywhere else in the world. The effect of this activity was and continues to be intensified by the swiftness of its creation and expansion: at the beginning of World War II the national expenditure for medical research totaled \$45 million; by 1947 it was \$87 million; and in 1967 the total was \$2.257 billion—a 5,000 percent increase in 27 years. The most significant characteristic of this research effort is the tremendous rate at which it is producing new knowledge in the medical sciences, an outpouring which only recently began and which shows no signs of decline. As a result, changes in health care have been dramatic. Today, there are cures where none existed before, a number of diseases have all but disappeared with the application of new vaccines, and patient care generally is far more effective than even a decade ago. It has become apparent in the last few years, however, (despite substantial achievements), that new and better means must also be found to convey the ever-increasing volume of research results to the practicing physician and to meet growing complexities in medical and hospital care, including specialization, increasingly intricate and expensive types of diagnosis and treatment, and the distribution of scarce manpower, facilities, and other resources. The degree of urgency attached to the need to cope with these issues is heightened by an increasing public demand that the latest and best health care be made available to everyone. This public demand, in turn, is largely an expression of expectations aroused by awareness of the results and promise of biomedical research.

In a sense, the national commitment to biomedical investigation is one manifestation of the third factor which contributed to the creation of Regional Medical Programs: the changing needs of society—in this case, health needs. The decisions by various private and public institutions to support biomedical research were responses to this societal need perceived and interpreted by these institutions. In addition to the support of research, the same interpretive process led the Federal Government to develop a broad range of other programs to improve the quality and availability of health care in the Nation. The Hill-Burton Program which began with the passage of the previously mentioned Hospital Survey and Construction Act of 1946, together with the National Mental Health Act of 1946, was the first in a series of post-World War II legislative actions having major impact on health affairs. When the 89th Congress adjourned in 1966, 25 health-related bills had been enacted into law. Among these were Medicare and Medicaid to pay for hospital and physician services for the Nation's aged and poor; the Comprehensive Health Planning Act to provide funds to each state for non-categorical health planning and to support services rendered through state and other health activities; and Public Law 89-239 authorizing Regional Medical Programs.