

grants. These operational programs are the direct means for Regional Medical Programs to accomplish their objectives. Planning moves a Region toward operational activity and is a continuing means for assuring the relevancy and appropriateness of operational activity. It is the effects of the operational activities, however, which will produce results by which Regional Medical Programs will be judged.

On November 9, 1967, the President sent the Congress the *Report on Regional Medical Programs* prepared by the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, and submitted to the President through the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, in compliance with The Act. The *Report* details the progress of Regional Medical Programs and recommends continuation of the Programs beyond the June 30, 1968, limit set forth in The Act. The President's letter transmitting the *Report* to the Congress was at once encouraging and exhortative when it said, in part: "Because the law and the idea behind it are new, and the problem is so vast, the program is just emerging from the planning state. But this report gives encouraging evidence of progress—and it promises great advances in speeding research knowledge to the patient's bedside." Thus in the final seven words of the President's message, the objective of Regional Medical Programs is clearly emphasized.

## THE NATURE AND POTENTIAL OF REGIONAL MEDICAL PROGRAMS

### GOAL—IMPROVED PATIENT CARE

The Goal is described in the Surgeon General's *Report* as "... clear and unequivocal. The focus is on the patient. The object is to influence the present arrangements for health services in a manner that will permit the best in modern medical care for heart disease, cancer, stroke, and related diseases to be available to all."

### MEANS—THE PROCESS OF REGIONALIZATION

Note: Regionalization can connote more than a regional cooperative arrangement, but for the purpose of this publication, the two terms will be used interchangeably. The Act uses "regional cooperative arrangement," but "regionalization" has become a more convenient synonym.

A regional cooperative arrangement among the full array of available health resources is a necessary step in bringing the benefits of scientific advances in medicine to people wherever they live in a Region they themselves have defined. It enables patients to benefit from the inevitable specialization and division of labor which accompany the expansion of medical knowledge because it provides a system of working relationships among health personnel and the institutions and organizations in which they work. This requires