

attempts to organize health resources on a regional basis have experienced difficulty or have been diverted from their objectives because there was not this voluntary involvement and commitment by the necessary individuals, institutions and organizations. The Act is quite specific to assure this necessary involvement in Regional Medical Programs: it defines, for example, the minimum composition of Regional Advisory Groups.

The Act states these Regional Advisory Groups must include "practicing physicians, medical center officials, hospital administrators, representatives from appropriate medical societies, voluntary health agencies, and representatives of other organizations, institutions and agencies concerned with activities of the kind to be carried on under the program and members of the public familiar with the need for the services provided under the program." To ensure a maximum opportunity for success, the composition of the Regional Advisory Group also should be reflective of the total spectrum of health interests and resources of the entire Region. And it should be broadly representative of the geographic areas and all of the socioeconomic groups which will be served by the Regional Program.

The Regional Advisory Group does not have direct administrative responsibility for the Regional Program, but the clear intent of the Congress was that the Advisory Group would ensure that the Regional Medical Program is planned and developed with the continuing advice and assistance of a group which is broadly representative of the health interests of the Region. The Advisory Group must approve all proposals for operational activities within the Regional Program, and it prepares an annual statement giving its evaluation of the effectiveness of the regional cooperative arrangements established under the Regional Medical Program.

*Identification of Needs and Opportunities*—A Regional Medical Program identifies the needs as regards heart disease, cancer, stroke and related diseases within the entire Region. These needs are stated in terms which offer opportunities for solution.

This process of identification of needs and opportunities for solution requires a continuing analysis of the problems in delivering the best medical care for the target diseases on a regional basis, and it goes beyond a generalized statement to definitions which can be translated into operational activity. Particular opportunities may be defined by: ideas and approaches generated within the Region, extension of activities already present within the Region, and approaches and activities developed elsewhere which might be applied within the Region.

Among various identified needs there also are often relationships which, when perceived, offer even greater opportunities for solutions.

In examining the problem of coronary care units throughout its Region, for example, a Regional Program may recognize that the more effective approach would be to consider the total problem of the treatment of myocardial infarction patients within the Region. This broadened approach on a regional basis enables the Regional