

ices for the homeless alcoholic, even where no community mental health center exists.

We are in full accord with the provisions of this section which relate to the funding for construction of facilities. The AMA has long stated that "alcoholism is a disease that merits the serious concern of all members of the health professions." At its clinical meeting in November 1967, the House of Delegates of the AMA resolved that the American Medical Association "identify alcoholism as a complex disease and as such recognize that the medical components of this are medicine's responsibility."

It may be of interest to the subcommittee to review briefly the AMA's increasingly active interest in the field of alcoholism over the past year:

We have issued a new manual on alcoholism for physicians, summarizing the essential considerations in the causes, diagnosis, and treatment of this illness;

We are planning an exhibit, based on this manual, for showing at professional meetings;

We issue new material for the public on alcoholism and problem drinking;

We have published a guide for industrial physicians concerning their role in alcoholism programs for employees;

We are encouraging more extensive and comprehensive instruction in medical schools in the nature and problems of alcoholism; and

We are urging that more and more general hospitals admit alcoholics as patients, recognizing that alcoholism is a disease that should not be treated in isolation but one that needs the concern of the total community.

H.R. 15758 gives strong encouragement to the integration of services for alcoholic patients with other mental health services in the community.

It underscores the complexity of the disease and correctly recognizes that it should not be treated as an isolated condition.

In addition, by making provision for the homeless alcoholic, irrespective of the existence of a community health center, it wisely attempts to cope with what promises to be a growing problem in the view of recent court decisions. These decisions have regarded the public drunkenness of an alcoholic as a symptom of his disease, rather than an offense punishable by jailing.

The preponderant number of persons arrested for this offense have had no adequate shelter, let alone medical attention. Very often, they look upon a jail cell as a welcome roof over their heads. Now, a substitute, and a more meaningful one, linked with adequate treatment programs must replace the cell.

We hope that these facilities will be forthcoming, not only directly through this legislation, but under private auspices, as well, encouraged by the expression of the national policy which this bill reflects. We recommend your support for the construction grant provision. However, we have long felt that funds for staffing and operation are properly the responsibility of the community, once the major burden of construction has been met with Federal assistance.