

At present, the number of medical professionals is insufficient to adequately meet growing medical needs. In order to cope with health problems of migrant laborers, more physicians and dentists must be employed to narrow the gap between the medical and dental care received by migrant workers and those services received by the nation as a whole. In addition to the expansion of the professional ranks, it is also necessary that more aides be trained as liaisons to serve as a link between the professional health worker and the migrant laborer. These aides would assist the worker in utilizing health services created for his benefit. With this goal achieved, the migrant worker would then become more of an economic asset to his country rather than a liability. A healthy labor force will alleviate costly health emergencies, thus reducing economic drain as a consequence of unnecessary illness and disability.

In order to illustrate the need for increased funds, I would like to use an example with which I am most familiar—the health program of Palm Beach County, Florida.

The migratory health projects in my county have expanded greatly since 1962. At the outset of these projects we were faced with the same problems plaguing the rest of the nation in administering to its migrant workers' health needs. These problems were partially solved by services furnished by Federal, State and local money. These funds provided the means for developing services tailored to the specific needs of the worker. As the program progressed, more migrant laborers became aware of the facilities open to them. As a consequence of the 1962 Migratory Health Act, significant advances were achieved in environmental health. State laws and regulations have established guidelines for migrant housing and sanitation; such programs would not have been possible without the assistance of the Migrant Health Act. Migrant workers are finally learning where to turn for assistance in treating their illnesses. Yet we have only begun to teach them the value of the preventive measures and positive health. Much has been done to aid the migrant, but more must be done if his environment is to be raised to acceptable standards. Once accomplished, it will require continual effort to maintain these levels.

In the case of Florida, funds for extended hospitalization and the staffing of physicians are completely inadequate. Consequently, obtaining adequate treatment is often difficult except in the case of extreme emergency. In some instances hospitals and their physicians have provided medical care without reimbursement. Therefore, if local health facilities are to furnish satisfactory medical care for migrants in the future, more funds must be made available through amendments to the Migrant Health Act. Speaking in behalf of the APHA, I strongly urge that the increase in funds conform at a minimum with the amounts recommended in H.R. 12756, introduced by Congressman Paul Rogers of Florida.

Only when we meet the overwhelming task at hand with sufficient resources will the migrant worker then achieve the same degree of medical aid now available to the general populace.

ALCOHOLISM PROGRAMS

The interest and concern of the American Public Health Association in the promotion of alcoholism programs is well established:

1. In 1963, the Association adopted a resolution recognizing alcoholism as a major public health problem and urging all State and local health departments to initiate programs.
2. The Association has prepared a "Guide to the Community Control of Alcoholism" which will be published later this year.
3. Through its regional offices, the Association has conducted a series of training programs intended to stimulate local health workers to implement their skills in dealing with the problems of alcoholism in their communities.
4. The staff of the Association has served in advisory and consultative capacities to national agencies, voluntary organizations and state agencies in the development of programs for dealing with alcoholism.
5. The APHA previously has testified before Congress concerning alcoholism bills.

The need for a major effort to combat alcoholism is apparent. Great numbers of persons are afflicted with the condition. The toll that it takes in terms of broken homes, lost man hours, employee inefficiency and physical suffering, is unmeasurable. In addition, the Supreme Court is presently considering the case