

Dr. RUHE. It is a very difficult question to answer—

Mr. ROGERS. Yes; I realize it is speculation.

Dr. RUHE (continuing). Because the question of need is what determines the definition of "shortage" and it is awfully difficult to anticipate what public expectation or demand will be. I think it has grown far out of proportion to what we had anticipated in past years.

Mr. ROGERS. The demand has.

Dr. RUHE. That is right.

Mr. ROGERS. Yes.

Dr. RUHE. And, the estimate of 50,000 physicians short today is really not our estimate; it is a commonly used figure. One of the things which disturbs us is that it has been very difficult to identify an exact goal, in terms of numbers of physicians, that we are seeking. It is a fact that the proportion of physicians to population has actually been improving. It has been getting better and, if our projections are accurate, it will continue to increase. We currently have a ratio of total physicians to population of somewhere around 152 to 100,000, and if our estimates on this are accurate, we will be up to somewhere between 160 and 165 per 100,000 by the year 1975. But whether this will meet the demands for physicians' services is something quite different. All that we can say, really, is that we are adding to the numbers of physicians, but all the people who study this field and attempt to predict what the population will want estimate that, in spite of the rising ratio of physicians to population, we will not meet the demand. So there seems to be a general agreement—and we would concur in this—that in spite of all our efforts to produce more physicians, we are not likely to meet the full demand for physicians' services in the immediately foreseeable future.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, now, I wonder if the AMA in its study has a solution proposed to meet the demand. Have you suggestions of how the demand can be met now or what action should be taken?

Dr. SODEMAN. Mr. Rogers, we are concerned about this. To supplement some of what Dr. Ruhe has said, the President's Manpower Commission report points out that during the period from 1955 to 1965 the population increased about 17 percent, the number of physicians increased about 22 percent, but the services of physicians increased 18 percent. If this relationship continues, it means that the demands on physicians are going to be greater despite the fact that our physician population is going up. For this reason, the utilization of physicians and the utilization of physicians' time are important and how the arm of physicians can be extended in their use and how the services can be rendered is an important part of this total problem. The American Medical Association, as well as everybody else, is greatly concerned about the methods whereby this can be accomplished efficiently, effectively, and for the benefit of the public.

Mr. ROGERS. Yes. I understand. What I was thinking about, have you suggested that so many new medical schools be built to be able to turn out so many physicians or have you adopted such a program as that, a specific program to meet the actual shortage? I wondered if you had done that.

Dr. SODEMAN. If you mean have the universities been solicited to establish medical schools—

Mr. ROGERS. No. That is not what I mean.