

colleges and hospital schools, we recommend that students who are candidates for baccalaureate or higher degrees be permitted to borrow up to \$2,500 in any academic year.

H.R. 15757 continues the forgiveness provision in the present Nurse Training Act and adds a total forgiveness provision at the rate of 15 percent per year for the nurse who is employed in a public hospital in an area with substantial population and a substantial shortage of nurses in such hospitals. Public hospitals in large municipalities have experienced great difficulty in filling budgeted positions. This forgiveness provision is one means to assist them in recruitment and retention of staff.

SCHOLARSHIP GRANT TO SCHOOLS OF NURSING

We urge approval of the provision which would authorize a new 4-year program of scholarship aid to students of nursing. Members of this committee approved, in 1966, an amendment to the Nurse Training Act to provide the nursing educational opportunity grants and for this we have been most appreciative.

As you know, very little public or private financial assistance has been available to nursing students in basic programs. We believe a special effort is required to attract talented high school graduates into baccalaureate programs in nursing. Advances in medicine and in technology, the explosion of knowledge in related fields, dictates that nurses master an increasing body of knowledge and also develop the intellectual ability to make the necessary application in nursing care.

Families are often unable to meet the full cost of collegiate nursing education. Repeatedly we hear from deans of collegiate schools and from nursing students of the need for scholarship assistance.

From a school located in one of the largest of our cities we have this 5-year example of the need its students have had for financial assistance in order to complete their education. In the 1963 class, eight students out of 24 worked full time; 1964, 11 out of 45; 1965, 11 of 29; 1966, 15 of 28; 1967, 16 of 32. A nursing program is difficult. Add to this full-time work and you must be impressed with the commitment of these students to a career in nursing.

DEFINITION OF ACCREDITATION

Section 231 of H.R. 15757 proposes a change in the definition of accreditation. The authority of the Commissioner of Education to directly accredit programs of nursing education is deleted, which we approve. However, a State agency would be specifically named as a body of the Commissioner could approve for purposes of accrediting nursing programs. We have grave concern about this proposal. We ask these questions: What State agency? Will a State agency accept federally established criteria?

The American Nurses Association believes that certain safeguards are essential to insure the best use of the Federal funds that H.R. 15757 would make available. It is most important that only nursing programs accredited by—or having reasonable assurance of accreditation by recognized national accrediting body be eligible to apply for funds under the act.