

All schools of nursing must have State approval. In the vast majority of States, it is the State board of nursing which is charged with this legal responsibility. These boards of nursing have supported the development of a strong national voluntary accrediting program because attainment of such accreditation indicates a program has achieved more than the minimum standards established by State law.

Potential students and faculty are attracted to schools which achieve national accreditation because they believe higher standards will produce more competent practitioners to serve the people of this country.

As of October 1967, 75 percent of students were enrolled in nationally accredited programs. These then are the programs in the best position to ease the shortage of registered nurses.

Of the 25 percent of students in nonaccredited programs, many are in the associate degree programs conducted in junior or community colleges. These have not sought national accreditation to the same extent as the other nursing programs. However, 42 are now fully accredited as compared with six in 1965. Of the remaining 239 programs, 94 are eligible to apply for Federal funds, having achieved reasonable assurance of accreditation or its equivalent.

We are confident that directors, faculty, and students in several associate degree programs look forward to full accreditation.

One community college program could not apply for accreditation because of an administrative edict, that was based on philosophical opposition to specialized accreditation and to its cost. The students in this program prepared a brief and appeared before the board of education to argue for accreditation. In addition, they raised the money to pay for accreditation. Their activities convinced the board of education and accreditation of this program is now underway.

Had nurses been satisfied that legal standards were sufficient to insure not only a safe practitioner but a highly competent one, there would have been no movement toward national voluntary accreditation. But the need for standards above and beyond those required by law was recognized by the profession itself.

The ANA urges, therefore, that you not add the clause "or by a State agency" to the language of the act.

I thank the committee for this opportunity to appear and present the views of the American Nurses Association.

Mr. JARMAN. Dr. Cohelan, we appreciate receiving this comprehensive statement and commentary on various provisions of that part of this bill.

What is the shortage of nurses at the present time? Can you estimate?

Dr. COHELAN. When you start playing the numbers game, it gets to be a little difficult. I think maybe Miss Thompson has some figures.

Miss THOMPSON. The estimated number of nurses according to the formula that is used at the present time, 300 nurses per 100,000 population, would indicate that by 1970 we should have 850,000 nurses in actual practice. We have at the present time approximately 613,000 employed actively. About a fourth of these are in part-time work.