

way by most professions which deal with human life and welfare—medicine, dentistry, for example, as well as nursing.

Voluntary national accreditation, then, Mr. Chairman, is nursing education's response to its own challenge—to provide the best possible nursing education in this country, aiming ultimately only at high quality in patient care. We feel certain that the intent behind the present bill is the same. We believe that the purposes of the proposed legislation can best be accomplished by making Federal funds available to those schools which are already meeting, or show promise of meeting, standards of excellence they, themselves, have determined to be reasonable and universally attainable.

These are the schools which qualify for full accreditation or for reasonable assurance of accreditation within the framework of the National League for Nursing. These are the schools which have the greatest potential to expand their enrollment and reduce attrition rates. These are the schools which can prepare the types of nurses you would want to care for your families and yourselves.

The National League for Nursing is recognized officially as the national accrediting agency for nursing education by the National Commission on Accrediting for bachelors and masters degree programs in nursing and as an auxiliary accrediting association at the associate degree level. The Office of Education and the American Nurses Association, the professional organization of registered nurses, officially recognize the National League for Nursing as the national accrediting agency for all nursing education programs. This recognition comes to the league as the administrator and coordinator of nursing education accreditation on behalf of all schools of nursing.

Nursing schools—both members and nonmembers of NLN—have rallied to this voluntary system of accreditation. Approximately 61 percent of the 1,269 programs preparing registered nurses now have national accreditation. The figures are included in exhibits II and III.

Another 12 percent have reasonable assurance of accreditation, assuring their eligibility for Federal funds, and indicating that their standards are such that they will soon be ready to seek full accreditation (exhibit No. IV).

Further evidence of nursing education's respect for peer evaluation is that the majority of masters degree programs in nursing make graduation from an NLN-accredited baccalaureate program a prerequisite for acceptance of students.

At the last count, of the 265 nurse faculty with doctoral degrees employed by colleges and universities, 221 were in accredited programs (exhibit No. V).

In hospital-based diploma schools, 1,539 of the 1,753 faculty with masters degrees were in accredited programs (exhibit No. V). This is because the best qualified faculty usually seek positions in schools whose academic standards and whose student bodies will make the best use of their knowledge and abilities as teachers.

In these days of rapid growth in higher education, students are aware that they should seek the best possible education for whatever field they choose. They know that accreditation means high standards. For this reason, accredited programs in nursing find it easier to attract qualified students who will reap the most benefits from their education, as already stated by Dr. Cohelan. Right now, NLN accredited pro-