

grams enroll 75 percent of all the students in schools preparing registered nurses (exhibit No. II).

Graduates of nationally accredited nursing programs show better results on their State licensure examinations than those from non-accredited programs. During the past 5 years, the proportion of failures for graduates of nonaccredited programs was approximately twice that for graduates of accredited programs (exhibit No. VI).

The State licensure examination, which is the same across the country, must be passed before a nursing graduate has the legal right to practice as a registered nurse.

Nursing schools were quick to respond to the challenge of the Nurse Training Act of 1964, with its provisions that Federal funds should be made available to nationally accredited schools or to schools with reasonable assurance of meeting the criteria for national accreditation. Reasonable assurance is the method by which schools with the potential for developing quality nursing programs can become eligible for funds to help them attain the high standards required for full accreditation. Through NLN, schools set in motion new procedures for granting reasonable assurance of accreditation to programs which had not yet sought national accreditation. From the inception of the Nurse Training Act to January 1, 1968, 253 programs out of the 314 which applied, were granted reasonable assurance by NLN. Of these 253, 104 are now fully accredited by the NLN, and a further 41 have applied for national accreditation (exhibit No. IV). If I may make an aside, I think the time involved in this makes this achievement phenomenal.

This same flexibility guides the league in its reactions to the many factors affecting both education and nursing today. Under a recent arrangement, the National Commission on Accrediting recognized the league "to engage in agreed to eligibility determination procedures for Federal funding (of associate degree programs) in cooperation with the regional accrediting associations" as well as to grant formal program accreditation to associate-degree programs seeking specialized accreditation from NLN. To date, the six programs which have applied have been declared eligible for Federal funds under alternate procedures worked out with the regional accrediting associations.

The testimony which I have given here today, Mr. Chairman, is aimed at supporting the belief that through channeling Federal funds to schools meeting the criteria for national accreditation, as set by their peer group, or to schools manifesting reasonable assurance of achieving such standards, the basic aim of strengthening nursing education and increasing the numbers of qualified graduates can best be met. This will mean added protection for patients, since they will benefit from higher standards of nursing care.

I have been speaking not only as president of the National League for Nursing, but as an American citizen—a member of the vast general public in whose hands, ultimately, rests the responsibility for patient care in this great Nation. On behalf of all your constituents, including each individual and agency member of the National League for Nursing, I call upon the Congress to see that funds requested under this Health Manpower Act are expended in a way that will guarantee quality patient care. This can be achieved best by making national accredi-