

power and concomitantly the dire need for adequate resources to overcome this shortage are matters of serious concern to the profession and our nation. This urgency is of critical concern to those of us so closely associated with the education of veterinarians who will be intimately associated with our nation's total health and welfare. I know, too, that you are fully aware that, like our companion field of human medicine, there is no shortage of qualified applicants for the spaces available in our several schools of veterinary medicine in this country. It is not likely that the inadequate resources now available for the existing enrollments can be expanded to permit the increase in enrollments needed in the next decade to meet the demands for veterinary services. More alarming is the fact that the present shortage of qualified teachers for our veterinary medical programs would be even more critical in any attempt to expand rapidly to meet the need for sharply increased enrollments.

It is unfortunate, in our opinion, that so few of our citizens fully appreciate or recognize the contributions of the veterinary profession to public health. Veterinary medicine as one of the "healing arts" shares equally with others of the medical professions the responsibility for safeguarding the health of the nation's public. Our first line responsibility is that of safeguarding the health of the nation's animal population. Apart from this primary function, the present concept of the veterinary profession places the health of every living being fully within the scope of the broad range of our several professional activities.

The full economic significance of the contributions of the veterinary profession to our nation's public health cannot be minimized. The veterinary practitioners are our first line of defense against diseases of our vital and ever expanding livestock industry. You know full well the benefits which have accrued as a result of the cooperative efforts of veterinarians in both Federal and State Governmental service in the control of livestock diseases which are constant threats, not only to our livestock industry, but to the public health as well. Veterinary medical research singly or, as is often the case, in concert with allied medical scientists has been, and continues to be a significant part of research in problems of human health. In our own research laboratories here at Tuskegee Institute our research scientists are now working on problems of significant importance to human health. The veterinary colleges, since they are the source of veterinarians, are in a most important position to further these contributions to the eventual solutions of disease problems of animals and man. Our full potential is only limited by inadequate resources to do this significant work.

All of our veterinary schools are faced with almost insurmountable financial problems as they endeavor to meet the challenges and demands placed on them as sources of the vitally needed veterinary personnel. We are particularly grateful for the assistance provided by Congress in the form of the Health Professions Educational Assistance Act which provides for Veterinary Educational Facilities Construction and Student Loans, but strong effort is now needed to provide basic operational fund assistance. Our own position, since we are located at a private institution, is stringently acute. We are being hard-pressed to provide justification to our administration for the excessive expenditures required to endeavor to keep abreast at the current level. Plainly stated, unless we can find a new source of financial resources we may not be able to continue as a source for veterinary education.

The Basic Improvement Grants not now included for veterinary medicine would materially assist us in this financial crisis. Veterinary schools, since there are now only 18 in the country, constitute national resources, not local, state or regional, but vital national resources for needed health professional personnel. As such they merit national support; inclusion of the basic improvement grant would be a step by this Congress in the direction of assuming its rightful obligation to the veterinary profession. Our own school is now trying to operate at a level that is 50% of the median operating cost for the schools in this country. This is truly an impossible situation. We must have assistance if we are to survive. It is interesting to note that in the last data available on comparative operating costs for colleges of veterinary medicine, at least seven of the 18 schools are operating at a level considerably below what would be considered a median operating level. This, gentlemen, indicates a critical financial picture for these vital educational institutions.

It has been said that the "half life" of a veterinary education is quite short; that so much of what we teach and what students learn is obsolete in a very brief period. This means that we must be ever alert to the changing needs for our