

AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION,
Washington, D.C., June 21, 1968.

HON. HARLEY O. STAGGERS,
Chairman, Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The American Osteopathic Association is genuinely grateful for the opportunity to present its views on H.R. 15757 during its consideration by the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce of the House of Representatives.

The American Osteopathic Association believes that H.R. 15757 provides the impetus for the solution of some of our health problems.

We endorse the health recommendations of the President in his message to Congress on March 4, 1968. The proposed Health Manpower Act of 1968 embodies his goals "... to meet the urgent need for more doctors, nurses, and other health workers" ... "to deal with the soaring costs of medical care and to assure the most efficient use of our health resources", and "to launch a nationwide effort to improve the health of all Americans."

The objective of the American Osteopathic Association is to promote the public health, to encourage scientific research, and to maintain and improve high standards of medical education in osteopathic colleges.

The Osteopathic profession is deeply involved in the attack on our nation's health problems in many ways. The need for more physicians is undisputed and the five colleges of osteopathic medicine continue to increase the number and quality of their graduates. The 1968 class of 430 graduates was almost 20% larger than that of 1966. Total enrollment in the same period has increased over 8%. However, the rising cost of education, especially in the health professions is a huge obstacle to the necessary expansion of the educational capacity of our colleges, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Seldom does a college have the capability of expanding its student body, faculty and facilities without outside financial help. Traditionally, the members of the osteopathic profession have contributed a higher percentage of financial support to their colleges than have the members of the other health professions. Today's costs and needs require additional support such as that provided by H.R. 15757.

The bill under consideration extends and strengthens five laws vital to our health manpower programs. Of most immediate concern to the American Osteopathic Association and the American Association of Osteopathic Colleges is Title I of H.R. 15757 which relates to Health Professions Training. The construction grants, institutional and special project grants for training and student aid available under the Health Professions Educational Assistance Act of 1963 have played a major role in our ability to graduate a steadily increasing number of better trained osteopathic physicians and surgeons, 63% of whom are general practitioners providing direct health care to the people.

This proposal is aimed at simplifying procedures and better coordination of the support of construction so that schools planning to construct facilities to serve a variety of functions will not be forced to deal with several authorities and several different review procedures and priorities. This would mean the elimination of many problems which have hindered the progress of some programs. Flexibility is desperately needed if the problems of the individual schools are to be solved and costs kept to a minimum and we welcome the flexibility of planning and operation and the increased support proposed in the grant and student aid programs which Title I provides. Along with this increased support comes greater responsibility. The assurance by the Federal Government of fair and proper distribution of funds and the demonstration of efficiency and good faith by the health professions will enhance this ever-growing partnership in Health.

One pervading problem faces our expanding educational institutions: the question of quantity versus quality. Such a dichotomy should not exist. What is needed is the fusion of the two and yet in the past an emphasis on quantity has aroused concern over quality. The question often raised is how to get the most out of what you have. Where facilities are limited and the faculty small, it is unrealistic to demand expansion, yet a vicious circle has developed in the health professions. In order to secure Federal support, an institution must insure an enrollment increase. This places added pressures and workloads on the administration and faculty and regression, instead of progress may result. Care