

upgrading the quality of optometric teaching facilities and increasing the number of students the schools are able to train.

We do have some reservations about the new formula requiring a 2½% or five-student increase of first year students as the basis for qualifying for a grant. It is conceivable this requirement for expanded enrollment could lead to even more serious difficulties for optometric teaching institutions already hard-pressed financially. One of our schools, the University of Houston College of Optometry, provides a good example of how this may work. In a letter to the AOA commenting on this legislation, the Dean of the school states: " * * * we are caught between needing to build for programs which we do not have or delaying building until we have developed the programs for which we do not have space." This is a fairly typical situation among most of our schools and colleges. They cannot qualify for federal assistance until they have the additional enrollment, but they cannot physically accommodate the additional enrollment until they have federal financial assistance to provide more space.

It is our thought the required increase of optometric manpower might be achieved more efficiently and economically by new or additional schools rather than by arbitrary expansion of our present ten schools.

The pending proposal will also expand the scope of existing laws to include other disciplines important to the general health of the public; this is commendable. We would urge that any funding formula contained in this bill be carefully reviewed to assure that programs initiated under existing law in no way be curtailed.

We hope Congress in its wisdom will move promptly to provide funds sufficient to accelerate the health care training programs and to assure the necessary increases in funds required to administer such programs.

The amendment to Section 723 of the Public Health Act is an important one, as it extends the use of facilities to research, medical or health library purposes, in addition to teaching. Research constitutes an essential adjunct to training of health care practitioners. Adequate library facilities provide reference data to support research activities. Since this portion of the Act applies to professions other than medicine, however, we feel it would be appropriate to amend the language on page 4, line 19, it read "health professions library" rather than "medical library."

Deans of the various optometry schools were solicited for comments on this legislation when it was first introduced as S. 3095 in the Senate, a bill identical to H.R. 15757. Responses from some of the schools are attached to this statement for your information. Statements from other optometry schools may be submitted separately.

The Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry and the American Optometric Association are pleased to have had an opportunity to support this legislation, which will assure that health care professions will be able to further extend the record of achievements made possible by the original legislation being improved upon by H.R. 15757.

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- Research Fellow, American Research Council of Optometry, 1938-39.
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