

HEALTH ASSURANCE

Employability insurance would also provide needed medical services—preventive and treatment—for all school children and require periodic reporting on their health status and health needs to prevent sickness and disability, to correct poor health, and to make children, and their families, health-conscious.

Every school would have available to it the services of a physician and a nurse to give periodic health examinations and necessary follow-up guidance to the children and their parents. Where medical care is required, the family physician would provide that care; if the family could not pay for the care, it would be given at public expense.

Older children would be given appropriate health information and guidance through practical health talks and demonstrations by physicians, psychiatrists, and other health educators, and by visits to various health facilities. With the disappearance of the general practitioner, the shortage of health facilities and personnel in urban and rural areas alike, sickness and disability being the greatest cause of welfare expenditures, and the runaway costs of medical care everywhere, such health guidance has become an urgent need for millions of medically indigent and other Americans.

Medical personnel in government, in private practice, in medical schools, and in research organizations have a priority responsibility to undertake this all-important health education—through a voluntary draft, if necessary.

These services, and the work-oriented training program, should involve enlisting the understanding and support of the parents, PTA groups, women's clubs, service clubs, and other community and civic groups at school district levels, and having representatives of these groups, and of the general community, attend the health and work sessions. Through such communication, parents could be alerted to the significance of these programs, specifically in terms of their own children and generally in relation to the community and what dependency and sickness mean, socially and fiscally.

But we need much more than an expanded and deeper health program for our 50 million school children. Employability insurance embraces a major program—universal health insurance—to cover every man, woman, and child, protection that is provided by every industrial nation in the world today, except the United States.

The main thrust of this program would be to cut down the burden of sickness by having every person able to pay for necessary medical care, assume that basic, priority responsibility for himself and his dependents, through health insurance payments by him and his employer. In the case of welfare recipients and other poverty-stricken citizens, government would pay the insurance premiums until the circumstances of these individuals and families changed to enable them to assume their share of this obligation.

Even a limited program of health insurance would produce direct results in checking the burden of sickness in the Nation by getting some needed medical care to some people, and by teaching millions of citizens their responsibility, to themselves and their dependents, of giving priority consideration to expenditures for health protection and restoration.

MONEY TO LIVE BY * * *

The final major segment of employability insurance would involve the provision of income maintenance grants, through a recast welfare system or a new program (as suggested by proposals of the participants in the Governor's Conference on Public Welfare¹) to individuals and families who cannot earn their own living because of illiteracy, lack of work skills or health disabilities.

The first two groups would receive the literacy and work training they require, promptly and effectively, from a nationwide network of management-labor teams under government contract.

Such programs have, everywhere in the country—

- (1) Taught the illiterate in record time, beyond anything yet achieved by conventional educational methods, and opened work opportunities for thousands of jobless men and women;

¹ See "Instead of Public Assistance * * *" on page 17.