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News Letter

VOLUNTARY HEALTH INSURANCE BILL INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS AS SUBSTITUTE FOR COMPULSORY PROGRAM PROPOSED BY TRUMAN

A new health measure designed to provide federal subsidization of voluntary health insurance programs in the various states was introduced in the Senate this week by a bipartisan group of five senators headed by Senator Hill (D., Ala.). Sen. Hill described the new bill (S. 1456) as a substitute for the compulsory health insurance system proposed in the Murray-Wagner-Dingell bill and endorsed by President Truman. The new measure is based on the same principle as the Hill-Burton Act of 1944 which provides federal aid to the state and communities for the construction of hospitals. The basic idea of the new bill is to encourage individuals to join medical and hospital insurance programs. The bill provides that the federal government and the states would share the premium costs of those who are unable to pay. Such individuals would be issued service cards entitling them to the same type and quality of hospital and medical services provided regular subscribers, according to Sen. Hill. In addition to the Alabama senator, sponsors of the bill include Senators O'Connor (D., Md.), Withers (D., Ky.), Aiken (R., Vt.) and Morse (R., Ore.). While the bill is devoted primarily to medical and hospital care, there is no reason why dental care could not be included in local insurance plans, Sen. Hill told representatives of the A.D.A. Since basic control of the insurance programs would rest with the local organizations, such a decision would be up to the state and local communities, he said. The Hill bill is expected to be supported by the American Medical Association which has been advocating extension of voluntary health insurance programs as a counter-measure to compulsory health insurance. Those reported to have helped draft the bill include representatives of the American Hospital Association, Dr. Gilson C. Engel, president of the Pennsylvania State Medical Association, and Dr. Paul Magnuson, chief medical director of the Veterans Administration.

SEEK U.S. SUBSIDIES FOR DENTAL, MEDICAL SCHOOLS

A comprehensive program of federal aid to dental, medical and allied schools of the health professions is proposed in new administration bills introduced this week in the Congress.

Four administration senators -- Pepper of Florida, Murray of Montana, Humphrey of Minnesota and Neely of West Virginia -- are sponsors of the Senate measure (S. 1452). A companion bill was introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Biemiller of Wisconsin. The bills provide for grants to the schools and loans to students in the fields of medicine, dentistry, dental hygiene, nursing, public health and sanitary engineering. A sliding scale for determining the amount of the federal grants is proposed. The largest aid will go to medical schools. Dental schools will receive the next largest share. The proposed formula provides that each medical school will receive \$300 annually for each student in the school up to the average past enrollment plus \$1,700 a year for each student in excess of the average past enrollment. For dental schools, the formula provides a grant of \$250 per student up to the average past enrollment and \$1,300 per student for those in excess of the previous average. For schools of dental hygiene, the scale was set at \$150 and \$800 respectively. Sponsors of the bills pointed out that the bonus payments would tend to encourage schools to increase training facilities for the health professions. The bills also provide for certain construction grants to expand physical facilities of the schools.

SCHOOL HEALTH BILL WINS
O.K. OF SENATE COMMITTEE

On March 18, the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee formally approved a bill designed to make widespread health services available to school children. The bill (S.1411) calls for an annual appropriation of \$35 million to provide preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic service to children enrolled in public, private and parochial schools. The program would be administered through the various state health departments and each state would be required to contribute to the cost in proportion to its per capita income and its child population. Under the bill, a state may make all children up to 18 years of age eligible for treatment of "physical and mental defects." Or, this privilege may be limited to children whose families are unable to pay for the care. The bill gets around the provision of many state laws that tax funds may not be used for programs in non-public institutions by directing the Federal Security Administration to make direct payments in such instances. The bill is sponsored by 14 Republican and Democratic senators and is believed to have an excellent chance of being enacted into law. The most significant feature of the bill is that it empowers states to extend full health care to all children if they so desire.

FIVE U.S. SENATORS TESTIFY IN SUPPORT OF A.D.A. REQUEST FOR
BUILDING FUNDS FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DENTAL RESEARCH

Five United States senators, four Democrats and one Republican, joined with Dr. Carl O. Flagstad, A.D.A. legislative chairman, last week in urging the Senate Appropriations Committee to approve an appropriation of \$2,000,000 for the construction of a building for the National Institute of Dental Research. All five senators -- Hunt of Wyoming, Murray of Montana, Pepper of Florida and Chapman of Kentucky, Democrats, and Taft of Ohio, a Republican -- took the witness stand in support of the A.D.A. request. This somewhat unusual action greatly increased the chances that the current Congress may provide the necessary funds to get the research institute into full operation within the year. The institute was created by the 80th Congress a year ago. The old Congress, however, merely authorized the appropriation of \$2,000,000 for a research structure to be built on the grounds of the National Institute of Health at Bethesda, Md., plus \$750,000 for the first year's research program. The 80th Congress left the actual appropriations to be considered by the present Congress. President Truman failed to include any funds for the institute in his budget message and last month the House Appropriations Committee turned down an A.D.A. request for the funds. Dr. Leonard A. Scheele, surgeon general, and Dr. Bruce Forsythe, assistant surgeon general in charge of dental affairs, U.S. Public Health Service, also appeared as witnesses at the hearing. The institute would be administered under the direction of the U.S.P.H.S. and the funds, if voted, would be part of the 1950 annual appropriation of that federal agency. Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee showed considerable interest in the testimony on the bill. It was indicated that the full \$2,000,000 appropriation might not be voted but that instead, an appropriation of \$100,000 be made to provide preparation of architect's drawings together with an authorization to the U.S.P.H.S. to enter into a construction contract for the balance of \$1,900,000. In his testimony before the committee, Dr. Flagstad pointed out the serious need for expanded dental research. He said, in part:

Although the United States has the most efficient dental service in the world, it has been impossible to keep abreast of the destruction caused by dental disease as it is such a universal and continually recurring affliction. It is a rather sad commentary on the control of a disease to note that the great majority of our people over the age of 50 years, because of the loss of their natural teeth, must resort to artificial dental substitutes, and many must do so long before they reach this age...Although an increase in professional manpower may be advisable to render more adequate dental care, we shall never be able to maintain our people in desirable dental health solely through treatment of dental disease. The only hope of successfully attacking the problem lies in finding the cause of dental diseases through dental research and the devising of means for their prevention...

A.D.A. OFFERS COOPERATION IN RECRUITING CAMPAIGN OF ARMED FORCES TO SECURE DENTAL AND MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS

The A.D.A. has offered to cooperate with the armed forces in the current voluntary recruitment campaign to relieve critical shortages of dental and medical officers following receipt of assurances from Army Surgeon General R. W. Bliss that he has no personal objection to the Association's efforts to secure administrative reorganization of the Army Dental Corps through legislation (A.D.A. NEWS LETTER, March 15, 1949). For several months, Association officials have offered to cooperate in the campaign provided that the armed forces would not oppose A.D.A. efforts to secure corrective legislation for the Army Dental Corps. It was not until recently, however, that any official reply was received to the A.D.A. proposal. In a letter to Charles P. Cooper, chairman of the Armed Forces Medical Advisory Committee, which is in charge of the recruiting drive, Dr. Harold Hillenbrand, A.D.A. secretary said: "It should not be assumed, however, that this tender of cooperation alters the Association's original view that no campaign for the recruitment of a substantial number of dental officers will be productive until the inequalities under which dental officers served in the Army are removed by corrective legislation. Nor should it be assumed that cooperation in the present publicity campaign commits the Association in any way to the automatic support of future legislation for the recruitment of health personnel for the armed forces." Although the current campaign has been under way for several weeks (A.D.A. NEWS LETTER, March 1, 1949), shortages of dental and medical personnel in the armed forces are still critical. The Medical Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet in Washington this week end to discuss the need for a special law to draft medical and dental officers. At the time the current recruiting drive was launched, officials of the armed forces said that its failure would result in a request to Congress for a special draft law. Last week, the Army announced that dentists applying for Army commissions will be permitted to serve in the Air Force if they prefer that branch of the service.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRAINING OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS IS SCHEDULED FOR EARLY SUMMER AT A.D.A. HEADQUARTERS

A two day conference on teaching programs for the training of dental hygienists will be conducted by the Council on Dental Education at the A.D.A. headquarters in Chicago on June 30 and July 1. Invited to participate are deans of dental schools now offering courses in dental hygiene, directors of schools of dental hygiene and faculty members of dental schools now considering establishing courses for hygienists. Also invited to attend are representatives of the American Dental Hygienists' Association, American Association of Dental Examiners, American Association of Dental Schools and the A.D.A.

DR. DONALD WASHBURN IS NAMED A.D.A. LIBRARIAN

Dr. Donald Washburn, assistant research librarian at the John Crerar Library in Chicago, has been named director of the A.D.A. Bureau of Library and Indexing Service, succeeding Mr. Murrell Wellman who has resigned from the A.D.A. staff to accept a position with the Louisiana state library extension service. Dr. Washburn will assume his new position at the A.D.A. on April 11. The new librarian holds both a dental and a library degree. He was graduated from Albion (Mich.) College in 1938 and received his D.D.S. degree from Northwestern University in 1941, and his B.L.S. degree from the University of Chicago in 1946. Dr. Washburn resides at New Lenox, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago.

EXTRA COPIES OF JOURNAL SUPPLEMENT NOW AVAILABLE

Extra copies of the supplement entitled, "Compulsory Health Insurance Is Not the Answer," which was published with the April issue of the A.D.A. JOURNAL, are now available for distribution. Single copies will be sent free of charge. Quantity orders, including special envelopes for mailing, will be shipped postpaid at 10 cents each. Orders should be sent to the Order Department, American Dental Association, 222 East Superior Street, Chicago 11, Illinois.

HOUSING BUREAU FOR SAN FRANCISCO MEETING WILL OPEN MAY 1

The A.D.A. Housing Bureau which will handle reservations for the 90th annual A.D.A. session in San Francisco on Oct. 17-20, will be opened May 1 instead of July 1 as originally planned, it was announced today by Dr. Harold Hillenbrand, A.D.A. secretary. The decision to open the housing bureau nearly six months instead of four months ahead of the annual session was reached because of large number of requests for hotel reservations. All applications for housing at the meeting must be made on a form which will be printed in the May issue of THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION. The applications should be sent to the A.D.A. Housing Bureau in San Francisco, in accordance with instructions printed on the form. Reservations will be made in about 100 hotels, but because of space restrictions only 25 hotels will be listed on the printed form. Mr. John J. Hollister, A.D.A. business manager, pointed out that San Francisco is a city of many excellent but small hotels and that satisfactory housing accommodations will be available for all A.D.A. convention visitors.

ERRATUM

Contributions to the A.D.A. Relief Fund from members of the West Virginia State Dental Society were incorrectly reported as \$54 in the March 15 issue of the A.D.A. NEWS LETTER. The correct figure is \$540.

A.D.A. MEMBERSHIP GAINS OVER LAST YEAR

Total 1949 membership of the A.D.A. is higher than that recorded on the same date a year ago, it is reported by Mr. John J. Hollister, A.D.A. business manager. Two weeks ago, on March 15, the total paid membership for 1949 was 62,214, including 53,239 active members, 2,131 life members and 6,844 student members. The 1949 totals showed considerable increase in the number of life and student members while active memberships were running about the same as a year ago.

BRIEFS IN THE NEWS

An additional major general in the Army Dental Corps will soon be appointed, according to reports from the Pentagon Building....Postage rates for THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION would be boosted 578 per cent within two years under provisions of a bill now pending in Congress. Under the new bill, the postage charge for mailing the JOURNAL would be boosted from the present total of \$9,420 to a total of \$63,900....A new dental health education sound movie is now being produced by Britannica Films, Inc. Dr. Roy Blayney, chairman of the A.D.A. Council on Dental Education, is serving as technical consultant to the producers. The film is expected to be completed by early summer and will be available for loan through the A.D.A. Division of Dental Health Education....The new stationery of the A.D.A. and the printed program for the 89th annual meeting in Chicago last September have been accepted for display at the 22nd Exhibition of Design in Chicago Printing now on display at the Art Institute of Chicago....Dr. Philip E. Adams, A.D.A. president-elect, served as guest lecturer at the U. S. Naval Dental School on March 25. Dr. Adams' topic was "What the General Dentist Should Know About Orthodontia"....A recent poll conducted by the National Federation of Small Business among its 136,000 members showed that 89 per cent are against "socialized medicine" and only 9 per cent in favor. Two per cent had no opinion....The Southern California State Dental Association has published an attractive 12 page brochure explaining to its members the various services, security and information available through the state society....The legislatures of Tennessee and Illinois have passed resolutions requesting Congress not to enact a compulsory health insurance law....Congress has been asked to have Christian Science healing included under medical care benefits for needy persons as proposed in H.R. 2892 by defining medical assistance as "medical or other legal remedial services"....The V.F.W. post at Tripoli, Ia. (a town of 1,200), has started a campaign to induce a dentist to open an office there....Approval of nearly \$2,500,000 in federal grants for cancer research and cancer training in medical and dental schools has been announced by the Federal Security Administration.