

Professional Education and Poliomyelitis

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THE National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis began the first organized attack on poliomyelitis in 1938. Since then, care of patients and research into the cause, prevention and treatment of the disease have been stressed.

It was the very importance of these two main purposes of the National Foundation which led directly to a professional education program as an important third link in a complete polio program. As the magnitude of the fight became apparent it also became obvious that personnel with specialized training were badly needed in much greater numbers than ever before.

The Professional Education Division of the National Foundation was created in 1944 to meet this demand. Prior to that year, a few scholarships and fellowships were available but there was no coordinated program of professional education.

This program has now grown to a point where our activities in the professional education field deal comprehensively with grants to professional schools, associations and agencies; appropriations for scholarships, fellowships and publications and arrangements for speakers and demonstration programs before professional association meetings.

Achievements of the National Foundation in professional education may be illustrated by a few examples. In 1940, when a small program of research fellowships was established, there were perhaps five or six competent virologists in the country. Since then, forty-four more have been trained with March of Dimes financed fellowships. Again, in 1945, civilian hospitals had fewer than 1,000 physical therapists available for all services. There were perhaps 800 more in the armed services.

To overcome this obstacle to adequate treatment of polio patients, the National Foundation has appropriated over \$2,000,000 for a physical therapy scholarship program. Since that time, the number of qualified physical therapists has more than

doubled—while the standards of education in this field have been greatly improved. In the first year of this physical therapy training program, five Negroes won scholarship awards. Including seven scholarship awards made for the 1950-51 school year, sixty-three Negroes have been awarded physical therapy scholarships.

As stated, the work of the Professional Education Division is carried on through grants and appropriations. Advisory committees of the National Foundation meet semi-annually to review requests for funds for specific purposes from schools, associations and agencies. Recommendations of the advisory committees are then submitted to the Board of Trustees of the National Foundation for final action.

The purpose of this type of assistance is to improve standards of training, employment and patient care. At present, financial aid is given to seven associations and one agency. They are: The American Academy of Pediatrics; The American College of Hospital Administrators; The American Public Health Association; The American Association of Medical Social Workers; The Joint Orthopedic Nursing Advisory Service; The American Nurses' Association and The American Physical Therapy Association. The agency involved is the Rehabilitation Center of San Francisco.

Advisory committees also consider appropriations for fellowships and scholarships. However, while educational grants are paid directly to grantees, money appropriated for scholarships and fellowships is kept at National Headquarters and the programs are administered by the Professional Education Division. Special committees composed of members of the interested professional groups recommend the awards.

Professional schools provide additional staff and teaching facilities through March of Dimes grants. Teaching programs are being supported in

virology, physical medicine, pediatrics and orthopedics. At present, six physical therapy schools are operating under grants of from one to five years. Other grants at seven institutions underwrite special graduate courses for physicians, nurses, physical therapists and occupational therapists, in the care of polio patients. Ten Negro physicians and many nurses have received refresher courses in the care of poliomyelitis patients. Further, March of Dimes funds finance the operation of basic and orthopedic nursing programs as well as instruction in occupational therapy and health education.

They aid in the support of nursing education programs at Dillard University, New Orleans, La., and Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee Institute, Ala. Teaching programs in pediatrics, physical medicine, and orthopedic surgery are provided by a National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis grant to Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tenn. Clinical supervision of physical therapy students at Lincoln Hospital, Durham, N. C., is provided by a grant of March of Dimes funds.

The Department of Health Education at North Carolina College, Durham, N. C., is being expanded through a grant from the National Foundation. Fellowships in neurology, orthopedics and pediatrics are provided by financial aid from money raised in the March of Dimes to the Provident Medical Associates, Chicago, Ill.

Since the inauguration of its professional education program, the National Foundation has trained more than 2,500 persons in professional fields related to polio. Of these, 142 are Negroes. They have been trained as orthopedic nurses, medical social workers, health educators, physical therapists, public health physicians, orthopedic surgeons, neurologists, and pediatricians.

In addition, financial aid to institutions and agencies has assisted Negroes in receiving important training in research and has provided several fellowships for graduate work in epidemi-

ology, occupational therapy, hospital administration, medical record library science and pediatrics. Development of films, conferences on medical care and research are financed by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and the world's populations share in this phase of the professional education program.

Since 1944, scholarship and fellowship awards of Negroes, and grants and appropriations to Negro organizations and institutions have amounted to \$1,662,027.56. This sum does not include appropriations of \$1,209,436.67 to the Tuskegee Institute Infantile Paralysis Center, nor nearly \$100,000 of National Foundation chapter funds for education service and financial aid to Negro hospitals.

The National Foundation is understandably proud of indirect results of its professional education program such as the first-time staff affiliations of scholarship winners at important universities, hospitals, public and private agencies. Notable reversals of admission policies of medical schools, associations, and hospitals are directly related to achievements of persons awarded fellowships through March of Dimes funds.

Important as such concomitants are, they fade into insignificance by comparison with the happiness experienced by infantile paralysis patients, their families and friends, as the patient makes the return to normal life pursuits as a contributing member of society. Seventeen Negro scholarship and fellowship winners of National Foundation awards, for the 1950-51 school year, are preparing themselves for the fight to remove the threat of infantile paralysis from the world. They will join other skilled professional workers and thousands of volunteers in insuring the National Foundation policy that no infantile paralysis patient shall go without the best available medical care, for lack of funds, regardless of age, race, creed or color.

THE FIRST EUROPEAN LAW OF MEDICAL LICENSURE

"Whoever will henceforth practise medicine, let him present himself to our officials and judges to be examined by them; but if he presume of his own temerity, let him be imprisoned and all his goods sold by auction. The object of this is to prevent the subjects of our kingdom incurring peril through the ignorance of physicians."

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