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CONFERENCE-WORKSHOP on Regional Medical Programs

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The Conference-Workshop on Regional Medical Programs held at the Washington Hilton on January 17-19, 1968 under the sponsorship of the Program Coordinators in cooperation with the Division of Regional Medical Programs was, by virtually every measure, a success. This success, in turn, came as a result of the content of the meeting which reflected both issues and activities of the Programs as presented by those involved in them. To make the information in this meeting and the material developed at it as widely available as possible at the earliest possible time...

- Attached is the SUMMARY of the Conference-Workshop as developed and presented by Dr. Lowell T. Coggeshall, Vice President Emeritus of the University of Chicago, at the closing Plenary Session on Friday, January 19.
- Complete PROCEEDINGS of the Conference-Workshop are now being developed and will be published and distributed within the next few months.

on the familiar subject of continuing medical education. I am pleased to find Margaret Sovie from Syracuse reporting on continuing education in nursing, using the teaching facilities of a university hospital nursing service. Again, as throughout the Program, we find a resort to electronic communications techniques, television, the telephone, and so on. The medical and nursing professions are capitulating quite brightly and gracefully, it appears, to the offerings of the visual and audio communications industries. Yet I am enchanted to learn, although not from a formal paper, that a network of small rural hospitals in a western area of North Carolina called the "state of Franklin" plans to resort to carrier pigeons to transport laboratory specimens back and forth. The pigeons can carry the load. But for transplantable hearts, I assume, it will be necessary to employ falcons. Actually, a pigeon homing on a hospital laboratory serving smaller institutions, to me expresses the very essence of regionalization.

We find another kind of innovation involving geography and logistics in the Program of the Mountain States Regional Medical Program, operated by an organization called WICHE (pronounced "Whichy")--the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education. Here is a Region covering all or part of four states--Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Nevada--an area of 440,000 square miles with only 2,100 physicians, 15,000 other health professional, and no homing institution, that is, no university medical center. Yet, I am told, this Program has one of the most active and enthusiastic organizations and has found a cordial reception in the medical centers serving it from outside of the Mountain States Region.

Much emphasis has been placed on the need for innovation in the Regional Medical Program, but it is not all innovation, of course. Many of the principles of good health care that do require innovation for wider and more effective delivery are deeply rooted in the traditions of medicine as well as community organizations. We find frequent reference to the importance of "concern" and "involvement" and at one point Willard A. Krehl wraps the matter up by stating: "The important objective is concern involvement."

Speaking of the "educational package," William G. Cooper says: "One of the major overall objectives of Regional Medical Programs is to enhance the learning of all members of the health care team in order that they in turn will be able to provide medical care for their citizenry. The "learner" in this case may be the doctor, the nurse, the medical technologist, the physiotherapist, other members of the team or indeed the patient himself."