



E000803

Regional Medical ProgramsOpening Statement

The Regional Medical Programs Service, in combination with Comprehensive Health Planning and the National Center for Health Services, Research and Development, supports activities calculated to enhance the capacity of the health care system to furnish services of satisfactory quality to all Americans. These activities are conducted by Regional Medical Programs which have been organized as functional consortiums of health care providers, each with special and specific resources which can be made responsive to health needs. Such efforts are designed to improve manpower development and utilization, to demonstrate new techniques and innovative delivery patterns, to promote the more efficient linking together of scarce resources, and to develop and implement quality of care guidelines and performance review mechanisms.

Role of Regional Medical Programs

Regional Medical Programs has broadened its original concept of purveying scientific knowledge in categorical areas to an activity that develops and promotes opportunities for the providers of care in the private sector to expand and improve the delivery of quality health care. Thus reshaped, it can accommodate changing concepts and carry out significant new federal initiatives.

Relationship to Federal Initiatives

The ability of Regional Medical Programs to coordinate resources and work successfully with other programs is being relied on to introduce

such efforts as Area Health Education Centers which will help alleviate the health manpower needs of communities. Similarly, Regional Medical Programs are participating in Emergency Medical Service activities where, by combining transportation, communication, and medical services into rapid response systems, we can save lives and reduce the likelihood of disability.

In the kidney disease area, we are stepping up our activities to develop national dialysis and transplant networks of resources throughout the country to assure maximum possible access to those in need of such services.

Need to Solve Local Problems

While the direction of resources toward new national objectives is important, we must not lose sight of the major disease elements with which the program is concerned. While we continue to direct attention to the major killing and crippling diseases, (heart, cancer, stroke and kidney), in doing so we strengthen the health care delivery system as attention is focused on such areas as hypertension and rheumatic fever.

What we have is a strong local-Federal alliance, some Federal funding on the one hand and local planning and decisionmaking on the other. The community and its Comprehensive Health Planning agency define the needs; and the Regional Advisory Group, with the assistance of the Regional Medical Program and its Federal counterpart, designs the implementation and operation of programs which will meet those needs.

With the 1970 program amendments placing emphasis on primary service, quality of care and manpower utilization and development, through local effort and in concert with the efforts of the other Developmental programs in Health Services and Mental Health Administration, we believe that the Regional Medical Programs have the potential to meet even the most optimistic of expectations.