

**The Third Annual Duke Conference
on
Physician's Assistants**



CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

November 12 & 13, 1970

Physician's Assistant Program
Department of Community Health Sciences
P. O. Box 2914 - CHS
Duke University School of Medicine
Duke University
Durham, North Carolina 27706

The most serious health problem facing our nation today is the shortage of family doctors. . . . The American Medical Association believes there is something we can do right away that will begin to relieve the shortage. . . .

What we advocate is simply that private physicians begin immediately to divest themselves of all routine functions that can be performed by assistants and associates. . . .

Does the creation of physician's assistants mean we can let up on the pressure to produce more and better doctors; Not at all. Obviously, we must have many more doctors as well as many more doctor's assistants if we are going to avoid a further crisis.

Walter C. Bornmeier, M.D.
President,
The American Medical Association
Reader's Digest (July, 1970)

THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANTS

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Third Annual Duke Conference on Physician's Assistants was to bring together concerned persons from the health professions and related fields with representatives of numerous health services and with government, to examine and better understand the professional physician's assistant and his position on the health care team of the future.

FORWARD

Conferences almost always produce great expectations and disappointment. People frequently attend a conference anticipating that, somehow it will result in some definitive actions relating to the problem about which the participants are concerned. Then, when it fails to fulfill this expectation, there is disappointment.

Yet, if we look at this objectively, we cannot help but conclude that this is an unrealistic conception. It assigns to the conference a role in which it does not belong and which it cannot possibly fulfill.

While such an assemblage does not have power to implement change, it does have the power to effect change in a number of direct ways.

In obtaining "visibility" for the issues it creates an additional impact on those forces in our society with the authority and responsibility to act. Moreover, a conference enhances the awareness, knowledge, understanding and expertise of the participants so they can be more effective in working for change in their own situations. Finally, it increases the dissatisfaction of participants with the status quo, destroying complacency and stirring up

impatience; thus creating a sharper motivation for action.

To the extent that a conference achieves these ends, it may be regarded as having achieved its purposes successfully.

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