

April 21, 1964

Mr. Charles H. Frenzel
Duke Hospital

Dear Mr. Frenzel:

During the next ten years I would like to have a hand in training men to be physicians' assistants. This career would be open to men with a high-school or junior-college degree, or to anyone who was sponsored by a physician because of work already performed in a hospital, physician's office, or laboratory. The physician's assistant would have one year of training in a physician-directed area in the Medical Center and one year of experience in a community hospital. He would be licensed by an appropriate change in the Medical Practice Act.

The physician's assistant would be able to differentiate in many ways. He could, under the doctor's direction, make home calls and see patients in the office. The physician would be responsible for determining the extent of his duties. In the hospital setting, he could be responsible for drawing blood, giving infusions, administering oxygen, performing bladder catheterizations, and giving emergency resuscitation. He would perform most of the straight service functions not done by medical students and interns.

In many instances, the physician assistant would, under the direction of the physician, form health care units which would operate in both the office and the home, as well as in the hospital. These units would care for all the acutely-ill patients and would consist of varying proportions of maids, aides, practical and graduate nurses.

The present structure of the Department of Medicine offers a good base for a start in this program. We have three laboratories (renal, cardiac and pulmonary) which have the necessary quota of physicians, professional nurses and sick patients. In the beginning we would like to concentrate on persons who have had some preliminary training in either the military service or VA hospitals. We would like to work out a program with the vocational training agency for one year of preliminary instruction at the high-school level.

I request that you call a meeting of the appropriate administrative personnel to discuss this program.

Sincerely,

Eugene A. Stead, Jr., M.D.