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Rhode Island Purchasing Agents'
Association
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I'm very happy to be with you today. Your invitation to speak here pleases me in several ways -- first of all, it means that you must have enjoyed my last visit with you as much as I enjoyed it; and second, it gives me an opportunity to report to you about my work and the things that occupy my time and my interests in Washington. The problems that concern me concern you as well -- you and your families, and every individual in our country.

In a way, one aspect of my job can be compared with yours -- I must weigh facts, evaluate needs, and try to fill these needs intelligently and adequately -- keeping an eye on future developments and balancing many factors, including manpower, facilities, and, of course, budget. When I cast a vote in the House of Representatives, all of these factors influence my judgment. But it is when I serve in my capacity of Chairman of the Subcommittee on Appropriations for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare that all these factors, plus the knowledge I have gained over the past 15 years on this committee are brought together in the interest of every one of our 180 million people. For this committee has the all-important responsibility of recommending each year the amount of Federal appropriations to be allocated for the conduct of medical research and disease control.

I think you are quite familiar with the outstanding findings in medical research over the past few years that have directly benefited you and your families -- such vital contributions as the polio vaccines, open heart surgery, and drugs for the treatment of diabetes. I do want to remind you, though, that many of these benefits would not have been possible without the help of the Federal government in providing funds for the conduct of research in non-Governmental laboratories, for the construction of buildings devoted to health research, and for scholarship and fellowship support of students while they are in training.

As my record indicates, I feel strongly about the need for medical research and for its support by Federal funds. But my feelings for Rhode Island, its people, and their needs go just as deep, and during the years I have spent as your representative in Washington I have had the good fortune to be able to combine these two concerns to bring about a greater amount of Federal support for medical research in Rhode Island.

Back in 1946, medical research and training in Rhode Island was virtually absent. By 1951, Rhode Island institutions had progressed to the point at which they merited -- through scientific competition -- a total of \$35,392 to provide grants for medical research projects. This year our State will receive more than \$2 million in Federal funds for research grants, for construction of facilities, and for training research personnel.

I am proud of this. I feel that it indicates two things -- first, that we--through the U.S. Congress -- have recognized the need to increase the amounts of money available for such purposes; and second, that our great State of Rhode Island is forging ahead in its efforts to provide better health for its own citizens as well as to contribute to the well-being of the entire Nation. We are taking our rightful place in health and welfare activities in this country.

Now I want to describe to you some of the things that have been accomplished here in Rhode Island with the help of these Federal funds. I remember entering an observation in the Congressional Record in 1958 to the effect that the time had come for Rhode Island to have its own medical school. Now, four years later, that hope is being realized. This past June, the corporation of Brown University approved a report authorizing the establishment of a full-scale medical education program. A major innovation in the curriculum has enabled the university to launch the first phase of a 6-year program of medical education which will prepare students for careers as physicians or as medical scientists and teachers. Those who will become physicians will transfer to a four-year medical school for their final two years of clinical work.

Then, less than two weeks ago I attended the dedication of a fine new building devoted to the biological sciences at Brown University. I am confident that great work will be done in this building.

In addition, the University of Rhode Island has received Federal funds to help them build a new biology research laboratory, and just last week they dedicated a new health science laboratory in their College of Pharmacy. Rhode Island Hospital looks forward to its new cancer research facility, built with matching funds from the Public Health Service.

These are just a part of the health and medical research revolution taking place in Rhode Island. Let me mention just a few more:

.With the help of Federal funds obtained under the Hospital Survey and Construction Act of 1946, which I have long supported, the Roger Williams General Hospital has added 50 new beds.

.The Rhode Island Hospital will be able to obtain and install the latest in scientific equipment for its new cancer research facility.

.A new health science building and laboratories will be especially equipped to do shellfish and stream pollution research.

.And the Ladd School at Exeter has recently added its Medical and Rehabilitation Unit for the mentally retarded.

Others of our Rhode Island institutions are also adding to their facilities: there have been significant additions made to Our Lady of Fatima, the Hattie I. Chaffee Nursing Home in East Providence, the Butler Health Center, and the Emma Pendleton Bradley Hospital in Riverside.

Now let's look at the contributions that Rhode Island laboratories and hospitals are making to the advancement of health and medical research.

Our State was among the first to provide uterine cancer tests. This particular type of cancer, which claims the lives of nearly 15,000 American women each year, is quite susceptible to successful treatment --IF the disease is detected in its early stages. The test makes just such detection possible -- long before it is suspected by its victim -- and early enough to enable a doctor to do something about it. Aided by grants from the National Cancer Institute, our State Department of Health has made it possible for every adult female in the State to have this simple test and thus move one step closer to the elimination of cancer.

Rhode Island institutions are also participating in the large-scale evaluation of the tranquilizing drugs. Although these drugs have been found very useful in the treatment of certain types of mental illness, they do need additional study to enable doctors to understand more precisely how they work in the human body.

Some of our medical institutions here are also helping in a nationwide effort to test and screen chemical compounds that might have possible use in the treatment of cancer. Currently, about 40,000 such chemicals are being screened each year.

Brown University is one of a group of leading institutions throughout the country that are collaborating in a large-scale study of tremendous importance. Under the direction and coordination of the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness, these hospitals are collecting detailed information on the conditions preceding and accompanying birth, and the effects of these conditions on the health and well-being of the child.

Such conditions as cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and blindness are some of the tragedies that may be explained -- and, hopefully, some day eliminated -- by the understanding of events taking place before, during, or immediately after birth. Eventually 50,000 women throughout our country will participate in this study.

Brown was one of the first to offer its resources in this great study, and the University is being assisted in gathering information by the staffs of the Providence Lying-In Hospital, the Rhode Island Hospital, Miriam Hospital, the Emma Pendleton Bradley Hospital, and the Meeting Street School.

Our own Lying-In Hospital has made a significant contribution recently to the well-being of infants everywhere. Countless thousands of people suffer serious brain damage because it was not known, when they were born, that some forms of anesthesia used during birth might so drastically reduce the amount of oxygen to the baby's brain that irreparable damage was done. The staff at the Lying-In Hospital has developed a monitoring system to detect this condition. Use of this equipment can be expected to help eliminate **brain** damage in infants.

I have just described to you, briefly, the tremendous, nation-wide project aimed at discovering the causes of mental retardation. And I want you to know that the other tragic aspects of mental retardation are being approached, as well.

Seven years ago, our Appropriations Committee took the lead in asking for a Federal program to help with the problems associated with retarded children. The report issued by our Committee at that time said, in part, "...we have only the haziest notion of what percentage of the unfortunate children, of at least as unfortunate parents, could be helped medically and through educational techniques...we have an equally hazy notion of the causes of the problem -- how much is due to brain injury, how much is due to the effect of environment, to heredity, and so forth."

At the present time our State counselling and referral service is helping the families of the retarded to adjust to their problem and to seek professional help. Our sheltered workshop is a new, and I hope growing plan for assisting the mentally retarded. Here, people are trained to help themselves -- to work, to do simple tasks and easy assembly jobs subcontracted from local firms. For the first time in their lives, these people perform useful work and receive pay for it.

Perhaps the most heartening recent development in this field took place just last week. Although it did not directly affect us here in Rhode Island, I predict that in the very near future it will affect every resident of this State. I refer to the bill just passed by the Congress and signed by the President, authorizing the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which will make it the ninth of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.

The tremendous medical research effort that has been made in Rhode Island is heavily oriented to child health and human development, so I am especially proud that once again our State is in the forefront of this new move on a national scale.

Our State is making such rapid strides in medical progress today that I have only been able to sketch the highlights for you. But I hope that I have been able to give you a picture of this vital aspect of my work, and of Rhode Island's accomplishments and potential in the medical field. It pleases me more than I can say to be able to talk with you about it. If I have been successful -- if we have been successful -- it is only because of the strong and continued support of groups such as yours.

Thank you.