

REMARKS BY  
ATTORNEY GENERAL ROBERT MORGAN

TO THE  
OLD NORTH STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY  
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA  
JUNE 20, 1974

YOU KNOW, AS A LAWYER I AM GREATLY IN SYMPATHY WITH  
DOCTORS AND THEIR GENERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC.

NOBODY MUCH WANTS EITHER OF US AROUND OR PAYS MUCH  
ATTENTION TO US PROFESSIONALLY UNTIL HE GETS IN TROUBLE.

EUGENE FIELD, THE 19TH CENTURY POET, SAID IT PRETTY  
WELL MANY YEARS AGO, WHEN HE WROTE:

"WHEN ONE'S ALL RIGHT, HE'S PRONE TO SPITE  
THE DOCTOR'S PEACEFUL MISSION;  
BUT WHEN HE'S SICK, IT'S LOUD AND QUICK  
HE BAWLS FOR HIS PHYSICIAN."

ALSO, JUST AS TRUE TODAY, I IMAGINE, ARE THE WORDS  
WRITTEN IN THAT ERA BY SOME ANONYMOUS POET WHO SAID:

"THREE FACES WEARS THE DOCTOR, WHEN FIRST SOUGHT  
AN ANGEL'S; AND A GOD'S THE CURE HALF-WROUGHT;  
BUT WHEN, THE CURE COMPLETE, HE SEEKS HIS FEE,  
THE DEVIL LOOKS LESS TERRIBLE THAN HE."

I CAN ASSURE YOU BOTH OF THOSE JINGLES APPLY TO MY PROFESSION AS AN ATTORNEY AS WELL AS YOURS IN THE MEDICAL FIELD.

THIS MORNING I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU WHAT HAS GROWN TO BE A MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM IN THIS NATION AND IN THIS STATE,

THAT IS THE NEED FOR BETTER HEALTH CARE FOR OUR PEOPLE.

STATISTICS ARE A DULL BUSINESS AND I DON'T INTEND TO BORE YOU WITH A LOT OF FIGURES, BUT LET ME JUST CITE A FEW NUMBERS THAT ILLUSTRATE THE PROBLEM.

SIXTEEN OTHER NATIONS HAVE A LOWER INFANT MORTALITY RATE THAN THE UNITED STATES. IF WE COULD REACH SWEDEN'S STANDARDS, 40,000 FEWER BABIES WOULD HAVE DIED IN THIS COUNTRY LAST YEAR.

TEN COUNTRIES HAVE LOWER MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES, ALTHOUGH IN 1952 WE HAD THE LOWEST RATE IN THE WORLD.

SEVEN COUNTRIES HAVE MORE DOCTORS PER POPULATION THAN WE HAVE. THE SOVIET UNION HAS TWICE AS MANY DOCTORS AS THE UNITED STATES.

WE RANK 22ND IN LIFE EXPECTANCY.

THOSE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE FACTS THAT EXPLODE THE MYTH THAT THIS COUNTRY LEADS THE WORLD IN MEDICAL CARE.

LET'S LOOK FOR A MINUTE AT THE SCARCITY OF DOCTORS IN THIS COUNTRY.

IF ANYONE DOUBTS THAT WE NEED MORE PHYSICIANS, LET HIM LIVE IN A RURAL COUNTY WHERE IT REQUIRES A 20-MILE DRIVE OVER A COUNTRY ROAD TO REACH THE OFFICE OF THE NEAREST PHYSICIAN.

OR LET HIM MOVE TO A CITY THE SIZE OF CHARLOTTE OR RALEIGH OR EVEN IN THE 10,000 CLASS AND TRY TO FIND A PHYSICIAN WHO WILL ACCEPT HIM AS HIS FAMILY DOCTOR.

MOST DOCTORS IN OUR CITIES, OVERBURDENED WITH THEIR PRESENT CASE LOADS, SIMPLY CANNOT TAKE ON NEW PATIENTS.

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SAYS WE NEED 30,000 MORE DOCTORS IN THIS COUNTRY, AS A MINIMUM.

BUT THE SHORTAGE IN NUMBERS IS ONLY A PART OF THE PROBLEM.

THE PHYSICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE DOCTORS WHO ARE IN PRACTICE NOW DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE INNER CITIES OR IN THE RURAL AREAS.

AND THE STATE BY STATE BREAKDOWN ON PHYSICIANS SHOW THAT ALL PERSONS AREN'T EQUAL WHEN IT COMES TO AVAILABLE HEALTH CARE.

NORTH CAROLINA, FOR INSTANCE, HAS 1.11 DOCTORS PER THOUSAND PEOPLE, WHICH IS ABOUT AVERAGE FOR A SOUTHERN STATE.

VIRGINIA, OUR NEIGHBOR, HAS 1.28 DOCTORS PER THOUSAND AND GEORGIA, 1.10.

BUT THE INEQUITY IS DEMONSTRATED WHEN WE LOOK AT MISSISSIPPI WITH ONLY .82, LESS THAN ONE DOCTOR PER THOUSAND AND THEN LOOK AT THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, WHICH HAS 4.11 AND NEW YORK WITH 2.34.

WE HAVE ANOTHER IMBALANCE.

IN THIS NATION, ACCORDING TO FEDERAL STATISTICS, ONLY 47 PERCENT OF OUR DOCTORS ARE GENERAL PRACTICIONERS, WHILE IN GREAT BRITAIN THE PERCENTAGE OF GP'S IS 70 PERCENT,

SO WE HAVE A PROBLEM HERE OF UNSATISFACTORY HEALTH CARE RATINGS AND A SHORAGE OF DOCTORS.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? THIS IS A QUESTION THAT IS GOING TO BE FACING THE CONGRESS SOON AND IT IS A PROBLEM THAT MUST BE ANSWERED.

UNDER PRESENT POLICY, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THIS YEAR IS SPENDING SOME \$224 MILLION IN SUBSIDIES TO MEDICAL SCHOOLS IN THE NATION. THE MONEY IS ALLOCATED ON THE BASIS OF THE NUMBER OF MEDICAL STUDENTS ENTERING EACH FALL.

THE ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO CUT THIS FIGURE TO \$125 MILLION NEXT YEAR. ITS SPOKESMEN HAVE COME UP WITH THE ALICE IN WONDERLAND ARGUMENT THAT A FURTHER INCREASE IN MEDICAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT COULD PRODUCE AN OVERSUPPLY OF DOCTORS IN THE NATION. IT ALSO WANTS THE SCHOOLS TO INCREASE THEIR TUITION COSTS.

I AM NOT AN EXPERT IN THIS FIELD ALTHOUGH, I INTEND TO STUDY IT THOROUGHLY WHEN I GO TO THE SENATE, BUT I CAN REJECT OUT OF HAND THE STATEMENT THAT WE ARE IN IMMINENT DANGER OF HAVING TOO MANY DOCTORS IN NORTH CAROLINA OR IN THE UNITED STATES.

MY PRESENT THINKING IS THAT WE MUST SUPPORT OUR MEDICAL SCHOOLS AND MUST DEVELOP SOME METHOD OF GETTING DOCTORS DISTRIBUTED BETTER GEOGRAPHICALLY SO THAT THEY WILL BE MORE AVAILABLE TO THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS.

SOME INDUCEMENT MUST BE MADE TO ATTRACT MEDICAL SCHOOL GRADUATES TO LOCATE IN PLACES WHERE THEY ARE NEEDED MOST. IF SOME PLANS TO ACCOMPLISH THIS HAVE BEEN LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL, THEN WE MUST TRY NEW PLANS BUT WE CERTAINLY MUST TRY -- BECAUSE THIS IS IMPORTANT TO THE WELL BEING OF THE PEOPLE.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY SEVERAL PLANS TO GET GRADUATES INTO UNDERSERVED AREAS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES CORPS, WHICH IS CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF TRYING TO SOLVE THIS MALDISTRIBUTION PROBLEM.

ONE PLAN, FOR EXAMPLE, OFFERS SUBSTANTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS IF THEY WOULD AGREE TO PRACTICE, USUALLY FOR TWO YEARS, IN A DESIGNATED AREA THAT NOW LACKS ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE.

ANOTHER PLAN WOULD TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF TOO FEW PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS. IT WOULD FUND PROGRAMS THROUGH WHICH SCHOOLS WOULD ESTABLISH MORE TRAINING POSITIONS FOR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS

AND THEY WOULD TAKE MUCH OF THEIR TRAINING IN UNDERSERVED AREAS,  
WORKING UNDER HEALTH SERVICE CORPS.

THE CONGRESS MUST ACT IN THIS MATTER, BECAUSE THE  
PRESENT ADMINISTRATION HAS SHOWN LITTLE INTEREST IN HELPING  
SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

IN THE 1974 BUDGET MESSAGE, NO FUNDS AT ALL WERE  
REQUESTED FOR NURSES TRAINING, ALTHOUGH THERE IS A CRITICAL  
SHORTAGE OF NURSES AS YOU DOCTORS KNOW BETTER THAN I.

EVEN THE ASSISTANT SURGEON GENERAL WARNED THAT THIS  
WOULD FORCE THE CLOSING OF SEVERAL SCHOOLS OF NURSING AND  
WOULD SERIOUSLY CRIPPLE THE NURSING PROGRAM IN THE COUNTRY.

THE CONGRESS, TO ITS CREDIT, FUNDED STUDENT NURSES  
DESPITE ADMINISTRATION OBJECTIONS.

IN ALL THE BUDGET MESSAGES FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS,  
PROMISES WERE MADE TO INCREASE FUNDS FOR CANCER RESEARCH.

IN FACT, THERE WAS AN ORCHESTRATED EFFORT FROM THE  
ADMINISTRATION THAT WE WERE GOING TO "CONQUER CANCER." IT WAS  
TO BE AN ALLOUT EFFORT, OUR NUMBER ONE HEALTH PRIORITY.

YET LAST YEAR THE ADMINISTRATION IMPOUNDED OR CUT BACK  
\$140 MILLION IN CANCER RESEARCH FUNDS THAT HAD BEEN VOTED BY THE  
CONGRESS.

I HAVE LONG BEEN INTERESTED IN THE PROBLEMS OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED.

THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION HAS ACCLAIMED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM.

THE FACTS ARE DESPITE THE ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO THE BUILDING OF 1,500 MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS, LESS THAN 600 ARE CURRENTLY RECEIVING FEDERAL SUPPORT AND THE 1975 BUDGET WHICH WAS SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS REQUESTS ZERO FUNDING.

THIS IS JUST A PARTIAL LIST, BUT IT IS APPARENT THAT THE CONGRESS MUST SHOW SOME LEADERSHIP IF WE ARE TO MEET THE HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE.

SINCE 1965, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS SPENT SOME \$3.4 BILLION IN THE EDUCATION OF DOCTORS, NURSES AND OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.

THIS HAS RESULTED IN EXACTLY WHAT WAS SOUGHT -- A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PHYSICIANS.

AND IF PRESENT ENROLLMENTS ARE MAINTAINED IN OUR MEDICAL SCHOOLS, THEN HEW HAS ESTIMATED THAT BY 1985 THERE WILL BE 50 PERCENT MORE DOCTORS THAN THERE WERE IN 1970 AND 60 PERCENT MORE NURSES.

I BELIEVE THAT THIS PROGRAM MUST BE SUPPORTED IF THIS NATION IS TO HAVE ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE FOR ITS PEOPLE.

I AM SURE THAT YOU MEMBERS OF THIS MEDICAL SOCIETY ARE ACUTELY AWARE OF THE SHORTAGE THAT EXISTS, BECAUSE I AM SURE YOU SEE IT EVERY DAY.

NOW I DO NOT MEAN TO IMPLY THAT MEDICAL PROGRESS HAS BEEN AT A STANDSTILL DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS,

I RECOGNIZE THAT IN MANY AREAS OF MEDICAL RESEARCH THERE HAVE BEEN GIANT STRIDES TAKEN AND THAT WE ARE BETTER ABLE TO DO MANY THINGS IN HEALTH CARE NOW THAN WE WERE 10 YEARS AGO.

BUT JUST AS IN EVERYTHING ELSE, INFLATION IS HURTING AND HURTING BADLY,

RECENT POLLS SHOW THAT AMERICANS REGARD INFLATION AS THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM FACING THE NATION,

AND WHILE PRESIDENT NIXON SOME MONTHS AGO SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD "BROKEN THE BACK" OF INFLATION, ARTHUR BURNS, HIS APPOINTEE AS HEAD OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD, SAID LAST MONTH THAT INFLATION IS THREATENING THE VERY FUTURE OF THE NATION,

THIS HAS STRUCK HEALTH CARE,

WE SPEND 175 PERCENT MORE FOR HEALTH CARE TODAY THAN WE DID 10 YEARS AGO. LAST YEAR AMERICANS SPENT SOME \$80 BILLION ON HEALTH CARE.

HOSPITAL COSTS HAVE TRIPLED DURING THE DECADE.



SO AS WE ATTACK THE PROBLEMS OF GETTING SICK, IT ALSO BEHOOVES US TO TRY TO GET OUR ECONOMY BACK INTO FOCUS.

INFLATION, TOGETHER WITH INTEGRITY IN GOVERNMENT, I BELIEVE ARE THE TWO THINGS TROUBLING NORTH CAROLINIANS MOST. AT LEAST THAT WAS MY IMPRESSION AS I LISTENED TO PEOPLE DURING MY TRAVELS IN THE PRIMARY CAMPAIGN.

INFLATION IS COMPLICATED AND WILL BE HARD TO BRING BACK TO REASONABLE LEVELS WITHOUT SELF SACRIFICE ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE.

BUT THE FAITH OF THE PEOPLE IN THEIR GOVERNMENT CAN BE RESTORED VERY EASILY AND DIRECTLY.

THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH THIS NATION'S MORAL LEADERSHIP THAT COMPLETE HONESTY WON'T CURE.

AND AS LONG AS I AM IN PUBLIC LIFE, I WILL COMMIT MYSELF TO GIVING COMPLETELY HONEST ANSWERS TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS.

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