

MEDICINE

Care for Aged Problem

► THE MOST IMPORTANT problem facing hospitals in this period of rising costs is providing adequate care for the aged, the new president of the American Hospital Association, Dr. Jack Masur, told SCIENCE SERVICE. Dr. Masur, who took office Sept. 27 at the American Hospital Association meeting, Atlantic City, N. J., is the first Federal Government official to head this national organization. He is director of the world's largest research hospital, the Clinical Center of the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md., and also an assistant surgeon general of the U. S. Public Health Service.

Dr. Masur was interviewed on the important problem of medical care, with special relation to Federal measures in effect and proposed, especially for the 17,000,000 over 65.

Q. Does the Kerr-Mills Act which depends on the state-Federal matching of funds offer adequate care for older people?

A. Admittedly, the Act alone is not sufficient to meet the needs of the aging. However, in combination with the Blue Cross voluntary health insurance and commercial carriers it is thought by the majority of American Hospital Association members to have potential adequacy.

Q. Do you mean that the Act as it stands could be improved?

A. Its accomplishments to date are being carefully studied by the American Hospital Association staff. The content of each of the state provisions among the present 40 cooperating states is being analyzed to determine how a more adequate bill might be set up.

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Latest Medical News

► PARENTS who expect antibiotics to be given their children for every case of sore throat should leave the decision to the pediatrician without undue fear of rheumatic fever.

Of 2,545 Chicago school children admitted to a pediatric outpatient clinic, only two, untreated with penicillin, developed rheumatic fever, Drs. Alan C. Siegel, Eloise E. Johnson and Gene H. Stollerman, all of Northwestern University Medical School, report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, 265: 559, 1961.

The physicians state that although some type of streptococcal infection is carried in the throats of even healthy school children, its relative mildness offers small risk of the childhood disease that so often damages the heart. Dr. Stollerman also reports the findings in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 177:823, 1961. The Chicago doctors advise further studies of civilian streptococcal pharyngitis (sore throat) outbreaks to help guide pediatricians in treatment.

Automobile accidents are sometimes due

Q. One of the common problems today is long-term hospitalization for chronic diseases such as cancer. How can the average person anticipate such expense?

A. All income groups are potentially indigent if they lack sufficient hospital insurance. The Blue Cross cannot meet the total cost, of course, because of the need for some type of voluntary health insurance to cover more comprehensively the cost of physicians' services, drugs, appliances, etc.

Q. As a Government employee, are you expected to advocate the Kennedy Administration medical care program when American Hospital Association opposes it?

A. No, but I accept the responsibility of assuring sufficient hospital care to all ages. This cannot be guaranteed overnight, and it does not mean that the hospitals should be expected to give custodial care that is nonmedical.

Q. What about nursing homes?

A. We have almost half a million people in nursing home beds. There is an urgent need for improvement of standards of care in a great many nursing homes. We particularly need a national inspection and approval program similar to that conducted by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals.

Q. Is there still a shortage of nurses in nursing homes and hospitals?

A. Yes. The American Hospital Association is working with the National League for Nursing and the American Nurses Association to try to bring more properly trained men as well as women into the profession.

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son is in good physical health and subject to emotional reaction caused by giddiness and apprehension until level flight is attained.

Eye color of children is unpredictable, Dr. F. Clarke Fraser of McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, tells a questioner in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* 177:884, 1961.

Although two blue-eyed parents usually have blue-eyed children, this is not always true. It is an over-simplification when textbooks state that blue eyes turn brown. However, a number of children with hazel or brown eyes were born with blue eyes that darkened in the first months of their lives.

Increased cost of medicine is predicted by the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association as a result of the decision of the U. S. Food and Drug Administration requiring prescription drug manufacturers to place inserts in most of their packages describing side effects of the drugs. By next March 5, the ruling must go into effect. The druggists say it will add millions to the cost of the drugs and will not promote the desired safety that FDA expects.

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