

MEDICINE

# Chronic Illness Increases

It poses a major challenge to doctors since seven out of every 10 deaths in New York state alone are due to long-term illness, says A.M.A. president.

► CHRONIC, or long-term, illness is one of the major challenges to the medical profession today, Dr. Edward L. Bortz, of Philadelphia, president of the American Medical Association, declared at the association's meeting in Cleveland.

The most common causes of long-term illness in the United States are: blood vessel disorders; chronic heart disease, high blood pressure, apoplexy, coronary occlusion; mental disorders; tuberculosis; cancer; diabetes; stomach and intestinal disturbances; anemias and other blood disorders; chronic alcoholism; genito-urinary disturbances including prostate gland disease; orthopedic (bone and joint) disorders; allergic states and disturbances of special senses producing deaf-mutism, hardness of hearing and lessening or total loss of vision.

Seven out of every 10 deaths in New York state are due to chronic illness, according to estimates, and over 70% of all disability results from it.

The problem of chronic illness is greater since effective remedies are being applied for many of the acute illnesses, such as infections, gland disorders and diet deficiencies. The fact that cancer is being diagnosed earlier and more cancer-threatened lives are being saved also adds to the number of those with chronic illnesses.

Old age, however, is not synonymous with chronic illness, Dr. Bortz emphasized. No age is immune to it and over 40% of patients suffering from some form of chronic illness are under 45 years.

"Long-range planning on a state-wide basis is essential," Dr. Bortz declared. "Medical authorities, with governmental officials and social workers should institute a state-wide survey in those states which have not yet developed a program. Classification is important. The basic approach to handling these patients should be preventive and prophylactic in character. For patients who have received maximum hospital benefits, custodial care either in homes or special institutions should be developed. Basic research, especially for degenerative conditions such as vascular and arthritic disorders, is uppermost in importance. Re-

searches in other phases of long-term illness need likewise to be greatly extended."

## Mental Upsets Cut Output

► THE industrial worker who is mentally upset can do more to keep down production than a worker with heart trouble or other organic disease who is placed in a suitable job, Dr. Harold M. Harrison, medical director of George Weston, Ltd., Toronto, declared at the meeting.

Pride in workmanship and sense of achievement have been taken from many workers by technical developments that make them just tenders of machines, not mechanics. A feeling of inferiority which Dr. Harrison thinks is having serious repercussions on our community life has resulted.

To remedy the situation and help the mentally upset in industry, large companies should have psychiatrists on their staffs, while the company physician for small concerns will have to learn more of this branch of medicine.

*Science News Letter, January 17, 1948*

PHYSICAL MEDICINE

## 50 Miracles Accomplished With VA Rehabilitation

► FIFTY miracles, as they would have been called in an earlier age, were reported by Dr. Donald A. Covalt, of New York University College of Medicine, at the American Medical Association's congress on industrial health in Cleveland.

The twentieth century miracles went further than making the lame walk. They consisted in getting 50 men, World War I veterans over 50 years old, victims of strokes, broken backs and other conditions, out of the beds where they had been confined as helpless patients for 10 years, back home, walking, feeding and dressing themselves and working part or full time.

The miracles were accomplished in nine months by the methods of physical medicine and rehabilitation established in the Veterans Administration just two years ago.

Besides their value in terms of human happiness, the 50 miracles saved the government over \$1,000,000, Dr. Covalt estimates. The saving is based on the hospitalization cost of \$12 per day for each of the 50 patients, each of whom could be expected to live at least six more years. In addition to this saving, these men are now wage earners and taxpayers. And they are just a few, he indicated, of the many from two wars whom VA's rehabilitation service is returning to normal life and jobs.

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One rocket, to give additional power at take-off to heavily loaded planes uses as *fuel* mixed nitric acid, sulfuric acid and monoethylaniline.

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