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Correspondence: From James W. Walker to Jacob F. Bryan on Children's Medical Group Letterhead, 1968-12-21

James W. Walker MD

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CHILDREN'S MEDICAL GROUP

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December 21, 1968

Mr. Jacob F. Bryan III, Chairman
Health Planning Council of Northeast Florida
Independent Life Insurance Company
Jacksonville, Florida

Dear J.F.:

The purpose of this letter is twofold. First of all, let me apologize for having to leave the annual meeting before I could submit the very excellent study that has been accomplished by Mrs. Barbara Chambers and the Health Planning Council with regard to nurse utilization within our community. Representative Bennett's remarks were so long that I simply could not stay until the end of the meeting. May I suggest that this report be presented to the next Executive Committee meeting and that it be turned over to the press after it has been presented for publication. I was going to suggest that each hospital in the area be given a copy of this study. I would not recommend that every member of the council have a copy. Since it is so lengthy, the cost would be great and the usefulness of such wide distribution would be limited. Again, I apologize for having to depart before time to give this report, but I trust that you will understand.

With regard to Congressman Bennett's remarks, may I just add that I felt that his attack on the community's V.D. rate was entirely uncalled for. Our community has labored under a divided health department for far too many years. It was the Duval County Medical Society that led the fight for consolidation of the health departments in order to achieve one strong department. Someday we will have a department equal to that of Memphis and Shelby County, which consolidated in 1905. Our V.D. rate, as well as other problems, will be well taken care of at that time.

The second, and more important reason for this letter, is simply that I think it is time that the Health Planning Council to move on to more lofty goals. It has served a good function in collecting data, and serving as a public forum for different people in the community to express their feelings on matters pertaining to health planning. When one reviews the accomplishments of this council, it appears that we have acted as little more than a rubber stamp to approved bed construction in our area. The exception to this was in the advice given by the council to the founders of the Doctor's Memorial Hospital, wherein they were

asked to bring in a better system of finances, etc. What I would like to see this council do at that time, is give serious thought and make definite recommendations based on the data received, as to the future care of the sick in northeast Florida. To be more specific, I should like to see our council make some definite recommendations as to which hospitals should do what to whom. Bed construction progresses at an alarming rate with little thought given to staffing personnel for these beds. I think we will all agree that we will go through a period where we will be temporarily overbuilt with beds, but eventually our supply of beds will be absorbed by the ever increasing demand.

At the present moment, there is strong feeling among the pediatricians in our community that all pediatric services should be consolidated into two centers in Duval County. Specifically, we refer to a center of teaching for patients at the Duval Medical Center and to a center for private patients to be centrally located, and all other pediatric services be discontinued. Those of us who have considered this problem for the past several years envision the moving of Hope Haven Hospital to an area adjacent to Baptist Memorial Hospital. It is also our feeling that a children's hospital, if it is to survive and flourish, must be run in connection with a general hospital, but with separate governing boards and separate hospital administrations. The advantages to this are too numerous to mention. To the best of my knowledge, there are no disadvantages to such a proposal. I am sure that in the field of medicine there are other such plans that could be carried out within a community to increase effective utilization of our hospital beds and supportive personnel, with the ultimate benefactor being the general public, whose interest we serve. Perhaps we should have obstetrics practice in only two centers in our community; perhaps we should consolidate EENT into one center; perhaps urology should be concentrated in one area. The answers to these questions that I raised should be sought by professional, competent, outside men or advisors and not necessarily by local people.

Perhaps part of the money that the Health Planning Council is to receive should be expended in this direction. The pediatricians in this community would welcome professional advice with regard to the above changes that I have suggested, but have no way of financing such a study. A simple proposition and questionnaire is presently being circulated to the pediatricians with regard to their feelings in this matter. May I ask that the council consider obtaining professional advice on this specific question as soon as possible.


One other point of interest that I would like to raise is that I wonder if the Health Planning Council is fully aware of the dynamic metamorphosis now taking place at the Duval Medical Center. The new building is under construction, department heads are being brought in, and the affiliation with the University of Florida is being strengthened immensely. We are in effect, sowing seeds for a large medical center, and perhaps even later, a school of medicine. I certainly agree with Mr. Bennett in that I think that a state supported university is certainly a must in this area and is long overdue. I also feel that a Baccalaureate School

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of Nursing associated with the University and a School of Medicine are a must. My reasons are more for the procurement of much needed physicians and nurses than for obtaining the Veteran's Hospital for his constituents, but I feel that we agree in principle. I should also like to raise the question of whether or not the Health Planning Council should become involved in the procurement of this four year state university, rather than being a spectator as we have been in the past.

The thoughts expressed above are certainly those of my own, and do not necessarily represent the feeling of all of the physicians of this community, nor of the Duval County Medical Society, whom I presently serve as President-elect. I am writing to you strictly in the capacity as a member of the health council, and request that these matters be brought before the Executive Committee for their consideration.

Very truly yours,


' James W. Walker, M.D.

JWW:cb:bd

cc: Mr. Fred Huerkamp
Dr. Wilbur Sumner
Dr. Dekle Taylor
Mr. Ernest Currey