



The Financing of Medical Schools

BRIAN BIRD [*J. Med. Educ.* 29, No. 6, 35 (June 1954)] points out that deficit financing of medical schools has been an established and accepted fact for many years. Tuition charged to medical students has not paid their educational bill and increasingly pays a smaller part each year. The deficit has thus far been met in state medical schools through government subsidy and in private schools through gifts, endowments and, increasingly, government grants. Since the costs of medical education will probably continue to rise and private sources of funds will probably continue to decrease, it seems likely that eventually only state schools will be able to pay their bills.

As one who believes that the continuation of private medical education is highly desirable, Dr. Bird suggests that the medical profession pay its own way. Tuition cannot be increased sufficiently to meet costs without limiting medical education to the sons of the rich, obviously an undesirable situation. He notes that practicing doctors are among the higher income

groups; yet all have received public support amounting to the funds required to defray the cost of their medical education above the tuition paid. He proposes as an alternative that the medical student, as a potential earner, borrow the funds from his school and repay them after graduation.

Dr. Bird believes that this procedure would not drive students away from private schools but that, on the contrary, it would attract the most eager, most self-respecting students. It is his opinion, furthermore, that any plan which would allow the physician the respectability of financing his own education would be a great deterrent to the state control of medicine. Further, the schools would have sufficient funds to pay their faculties proper salaries. Dr. Bird realizes that there are many other arguments on the subject of financing medical schools. He believes, however, that whatever the approach to the problem the one significant question must be kept clearly evident: "Is there any real reason why doctors should not finance their own education?"—W.L.S. JR.

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