

Carter's Budget: Little Biomedical Growth; Energy Conservation Pushed

President Jimmy Carter sent his revisions of former President Ford's budget proposals for fiscal year 1978 to Congress on 22 February—right on time—and, as expected, the budget remains primarily the same (*Science*, 28 January). As Carter said in his official budget message, and Cabinet officers reiterated during budget briefings for the press, "The 1978 budget is essentially still President Ford's budget, with only such limited revisions as my Administration has had time to make. But these revisions do reflect our careful choices among many possible options. . . ."

With respect to scientific research and training, the Carter revisions may indeed point out some of the directions the new Administration intends to take. For biomedical research and the delivery of health care, it looks as though 1978 will be the year of the child, with new programs emphasizing "alternatives to abortion" and immunization of preschool-age children of poor families. As far as physician training goes, the Carter position appears to be remarkably close to the Republican position, with no great initiatives to support medical students.

On the other hand, the initiatives that Ford proposed for basic research supported by the National Science Foundation still stand in the Carter budget, as does the proposal to create a new, broad-based research grants program in the Department of Agriculture for the support of research in universities that do not now have strong agricultural science.

But in the health area, Carter, and Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Joseph A. Califano, Jr., let some of their own preferences be known. Thus, there is an effort to support work on children and, as Califano said, "better babies." The only Carter change in the Ford budget for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is a \$5 million increase for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), to be spent on reproductive physiology and studies of normal prenatal development. At a press briefing Califano, who is clearly on the record as an opponent of abortion, said that there must be research so that, for example, a pregnant woman who knows she is carrying a

Down's syndrome (or Mongoloid) baby has an alternative to abortion. That, of course, means a cure for the disease, which is caused by the presence of an extra chromosome. Califano won't get it for \$5 million, but it shows the direction of his thinking. Another \$30 million in "alternatives to abortion" money has been added to the HEW budget for family planning programs and research on sex education, foster care, and adoption.

The other major pro-child proposal in the Carter budget is a request for \$345 million to pay for a program called Comprehensive Health Assessments and Primary Care for Children (CHAP), which means locating poor, young children, giving them a physical checkup, immunizations (free), and follow-up physicals and care "just like middle-class children get." CHAP is essentially an extension and expansion (by \$180 million) of an existing program that Califano says has been "ineffective."

As far as health manpower and support of medical education is concerned—another "highlight" of the HEW budget—Califano expressed the Administration's view when he said, "We don't need a lot more doctors and don't need to continue education funds." That does not mean that he is calling for an end of "capitation" funds to schools of medicine, osteopathy, and dentistry; but he would cut Ford's \$116 million proposal down a little to \$114 million and eliminate it altogether for those studying other health professions, such as veterinary medicine and pharmacy.

Breeder and Other Long-Term Energy Projects Cut Back

The Carter budget gives an increased emphasis to energy conservation and to development of new energy supplies for the near- to-middle term and less emphasis to longer term projects, such as the breeder reactor and fusion energy. Indeed, the Clinch River breeder demonstration project could well be canceled altogether, although no decision about this will be made pending a review of the entire Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor (LMFBR) program which is to

The Carter people have picked up the current view that the doctor problem in this country has to do with geographic and specialty maldistribution, rather than a doctor shortage, and in that area they propose spending more than Ford wanted to. Through special project grants for training, they would spend \$45 million (compared to Ford's \$9 million) on residency programs in "family medicine" and dentistry and also increase funding for residencies in "primary care" from \$6 million to \$15 million. In addition, there is a new emphasis on supporting training of so-called "physician extenders" or "assistants" who Califano thinks could bring "some health competition [for patients]" into a system controlled by M.D.'s.

Already there have been grumblings on Capitol Hill over these and other proposed changes in funding and administration of the monumental Health Professions Educational Assistance Act, which Congress passed last year after nearly 4 years of sometimes bitter negotiating (*Science*, 12 November 1976). For instance, at recent hearings of the Senate health subcommittee, chaired by Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), Republicans and Democrats alike were saying in effect: After all we've been through to get this bill we don't need these people coming in and trying to change things now. Carter is bound to have some trouble on this one.

As the year goes on there are sure to be other Carter Administration moves for changes in the health and biomedical research budgets, but no one is guessing what form they will take. Administration officials, Califano reports, had enough trouble as it was coming up with the changes they did during their first month in office, at a time when some top spots, including the assistant secretary for health, remain unfilled. Just give them a little more time.

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be carried out over the next few months.

In a related development, the Carter Administration also has sent to Congress draft legislation for the establishment of a "Department of Energy." Under this legislation, three existing agencies—the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), the Federal Energy Administration (FEA), and the Federal Power Commission—would be abolished, and their functions would be transferred to the new department, which