

Institutes Proposed for Deafness, Rehabilitation

One of the things that the brass at the National Institutes of Health want least is another institute. Legislation recently introduced in Congress would give them two—a National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, and a National Center for Rehabilitation Medicine, which actually is one step below an institute on the administrative ladder. A couple of years ago, NIH was legislatively forced to establish a Nursing Center, which it did not want, and it had to create the National Institute for Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases as its 12th full-fledged institute.

NIH has argued consistently that new institutes and centers merely add administrative costs (in the neighborhood of \$5 million) to research that is already being supported. At a recent House hearing on the budget, NIH director James B. Wyngaarden said that \$50 million a year goes to research on deafness and \$107 million is allocated for rehabilitation research.

But health lobbyists, whose goal is to get increased status and visibility for their special diseases, have never bought the argument that their pet projects were already well funded. ■ B.J.C.

It Matters How You Slice the Pie

"It is time to realign our research priorities," Representative Henry A. Waxman (D-CA) said at a recent gathering on Capitol Hill organized by the American Federation for Clinical Research (AFCR). Saying there is no need to "apologize" for advocating more money for biomedical research, Waxman noted that the country spends

more on military research than on health, occasionally for "planes that don't fly and ships that sink."

According to the AFCR, "In 18 months the Department of Defense spends more on research and development than the National Institutes of Health has spent in its entire 100-year existence."

In an effort to respond to charges that researchers are not politically active enough, the AFCR tried to counter that image by delivering an apple pie to every member of the House and Senate, with a message that said "It matters how you slice it."

Three long-term supporters of NIH showed up at a press conference to receive their pies from AFCR officers David R. Hathaway and Willa A. Hsueh. In addition to Waxman, Representative Joseph D. Early (D-MA) and Senator Lowell P. Weicker, Jr. (R-CN), attended.

In keeping with the rhetorical pitch of the occasion, Early proclaimed that "If the United States is going to lead the world, it is going to be in biomedical research." Weicker said that the disparity between military and health research funding shows that "the business of life takes a back seat to the business of death insofar as the activities of this government are concerned."

While avowing that AFCR recognizes the importance of military research, its officers criticized a decade-long pattern of budget decisions. Under the President's budget proposal for fiscal year 1989, "\$41.2 billion (66%) of federal research and development spending would be allocated to the military, compared to \$13.8 billion in FY 1979; \$8.2 billion (13%) would be allocated to health, compared to \$3.6 billion (also 13%) in FY 1979," AFCR says.

The AFCR is an elective society of 13,000 active young researchers who automatically become emeritus on their 41st birthdays. The apple pie caper was meant as a sign that they are trying to become politically visible. ■ B.J.C.

Hammer Seeks \$1 Billion to Cure Cancer

It is reminiscent of former President Nixon's declaration of "war on cancer." Industrialist Armand Hammer, Ronald Reagan's appointee as chairman of the President's Cancer Panel that oversees the National Cancer Institute, has announced a \$1-billion campaign to "Stop Cancer." Hammer has donated \$100,000 to the cause. Convinced that the cure to cancer lies in more money for research, Hammer is intent on raising the NCI's budget from \$1.4 billion to \$2.4 billion, with half of the added billion from the federal government and half donated by private citizens and corporations.

Hammer has enlisted comedian Bill Cosby in his crusade and recently played a guest part on Cosby's prime time television show. Portraying the grandfather of a young man with cancer, Hammer made a cameo appearance to call for public support. "If we could raise enough money for research we could put an end to cancer. . . . The government's got to put up more money. If everyone would write to their congressman, I'm sure we could get the job done," said grandfather Hammer.

In announcing his campaign, Hammer, a nonpracticing M.D., said "My father was a doctor and he used to say polio was incurable. Yet Dr. Jonas Salk was able to cure polio with money raised through the March of Dimes."

Salk's achievement followed the successful discovery of the polio virus by three Harvard scientists who shared the Nobel Prize for the fundamental work that made a vaccine possible. ■ B.J.C.

Kennedy Suggests NIH Foundation

As the Institute of Medicine gears up for a study of the intramural research program at the National Institutes of Health, it will no doubt get lots of advice about how to solve the bureaucratic and salary impediments that are bothering NIH (*Science*, 25 March, p. 1479). Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), who wants IOM to consider the idea of creating a private NIH foundation, is at the head of the line.

Such a foundation could receive money from private sources, including industry, and would be in a position to augment scientists' salaries when federal pay caps become an obstacle to keeping top people. "Of course, the foundation would have to be designed so that the scientists would be insulated from the funding sources," a Kennedy aide says. ■ B.J.C.



Senator Lowell Weicker endorses support for health research as AFCR officers David Hathaway and Willa Hsueh look on.

Photo by Randolph