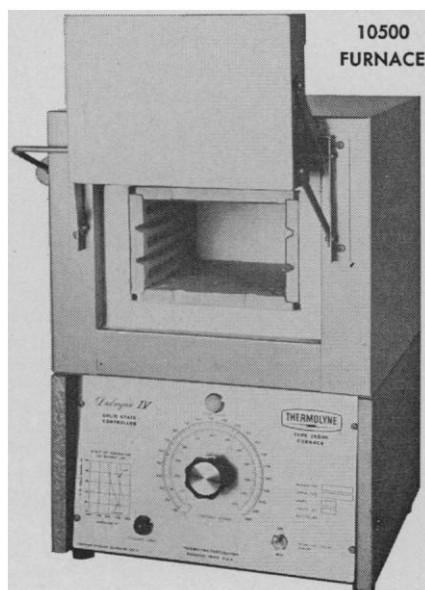


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Psychology and Health Care

John Walsh (News and Comment, 3 Dec. 1971, p. 1003) reports on "Health manpower training: Funding levels at issue" and describes certain inherent problems of fiscal, political, and manpower balance. Both Walsh's comment and the legislation that was enacted omit realistic consideration of a major health profession—psychology.

In terms of hospital beds, patients affected, community services provided, professionals involved, or funds expended—to say nothing of social cost—mental disorders constitute a very major and substantial health problem. Yet the current national-level proposals for health insurance and the broad range of existing prepaid health coverage largely exclude or seriously limit coverage for mental disorder. These proposals and existing coverage commonly exclude the services of psychologists or fail to recognize psychologists as the independent health practitioners that they are—licensed in 44 states and the District of Columbia and represented by a national organization of over 33,000 members, the American Psychological Association.

If there is any doubt that psychology has major substantive relevance and capacity to deliver in this arena, or that mental disorder is not a major health problem, I would recommend a review of the ten reports (published as separate texts by Basic Books, New York) of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health appointed by President Kennedy. Six of these texts were authored, and one coauthored, by psychologists, perhaps evidence both of the preeminent scope of knowledge which my profession has to contribute to this field and its documented willingness to participate in the resolution of health problems at the national level.

HERBERT DÖRKEN

*Department of Mental Hygiene,
State of California, Human Relations
Agency, 744 P Street,
Sacramento 95814*

Research Management

In the editorial (1 Oct., p. 11) that was excerpted from the 1945–1946 Carnegie Institution yearbook (1), Vannevar Bush seems to imply that fundamental research cannot be managed, but only supported, with the management of a program left to the scientist conducting the research. Quite the con-

trary! Experience in industry has repeatedly shown that the scientist conducting the research is frequently the poorest choice as manager due to his lack of objectivity, or removal from personal involvement. It has been far more successful for the manager to be a separate person from the researcher, although also a scientist.

The "managed" approach has also more successfully kept the final objective in clear focus. The alternative course, as advocated by Bush, frequently results in a diffuse approach, which either never comes to grips with the central problem, or takes a considerably longer time to do so.

The managed approach is not without its disadvantages or risks. But even Bush's "eminent" scientists must make judgments and take the chance of making a wrong choice. The central issue is to make sure that the managers or management groups are properly staffed. If the scientists are anywhere as eminent as Bush contends, they should have no difficulty convincing their managers of the wisdom of their choices. None of us likes to be called to account for our work and forced to justify the direction we have chosen. But in the balance, this is preferable in the case of any national commitments we might choose to make, now or in the future.

F. LOUIS FLOYD

Post Office Box 197

Spring House, Pennsylvania 19477

Reference

1. Report of the President, *Carnegie Inst. Washington Yearb.* 45, 1–13 (1946).

The College Professor

Because the AAAS has recently made efforts to reform its governance, I decided to read the list (18 Feb., p. 804) of AAAS officers, committees, and representatives. An intriguing pattern began to emerge; of the scores of academic men and women listed, only two are affiliated with an undergraduate college (if we regard Dartmouth, the City College of New York, and Queens College as entities greater in scope and size than a "college"). Of these two, Rhoda Dorsey, who is on the Committee on Minorities in Science, is apparently a representative not only of the majority sex in America but also of a significant minority in academia, the *college* professor. The other, Donald Aitkin, is on the Youth Council.

Why does the AAAS have active