

confidences within the constraints of law." The traditional code said that a physician could divulge patient information when required by law, but also when it was in the best interests of the patient or society.

The main problem with the new code, Veatch said, is not in its content, but in the way it was drafted. It had no input from anyone outside the AMA, he said. "It was all in-house."

James Todd, chairman of the AMA committee which drafted the code, doesn't like the idea of including laymen at all. Nonphysicians "don't understand all the ramifications. It's like having the inmates run the institution," he said.

House Votes Metric Board An Extension After Debate

"What is good for a scientist and what is good for the progress in the scientific field may not be good for the housewife," said Philip Crane, Republican congressman from Illinois.

Crane allied himself with housewives on 22 July when controversy over the role of the U.S. Metric Board flared in the House. Congressmen were debating appropriations for the coming fiscal year. Despite the misgivings of some members, the House voted a budget of \$2.8 million for the group.

Crane and Eldon Rudd (R-Ariz.) said that the metric board has been overstepping its bounds by promoting, rather than coordinating, voluntary conversion to the metric system. When the appropriation bill came up, Rudd tried to tack on an amendment that would prohibit the board from promoting metric.

Board director Malcolm O'Hagan says that the group understands that its role is not to advocate change. "But there's a fine line between education and advocacy," he said.

Rudd argued, for example, that the board is actively supporting metric conversion of gas pumps that would impose "enormous costs, cause confusion, unnecessary hardship, and inconvenience to American motorists."

In support of Rudd's amendment, Crane said that conversion to metric is not necessarily in the interest of ordinary citizens. He added that use of the

metric system doesn't promote U.S. trade overseas as some people contend.

Other congressmen took issue with the Rudd amendment, arguing that the proposal limited the board too much. The chairman of the Committee on Science and Technology, Don Fuqua (D-Fla.) and Representative Robert McClory (R-Ill.) said that strong critics of the board might use the amendment to mean that the group could not even explain the differences between metric and the traditional U.S. system.

After 45 minutes of debate, the House defeated the amendment 260 to 141. Crane, however, was not about to give in. Immediately, for the third year in a row, he proposed an amendment to abolish the board. If persons or private industry want to convert to metric let them do it on their own, not at government expense.

He recalled a meeting this spring at which metric board members were to explain metric conversion to congressional aides. The aides were given packets with metric rulers and tables and then were served refreshments. Crane complained about the waste of taxpayers' money on his staff aide. "What right have we in Congress to take money from a struggling young farmer in Iowa to inform my staff aide that he is 174 centimeters tall?"

Crane's amendment was defeated by a margin of more than 2 to 1.

The House later passed the appropriation, though it cut the group's request for \$891,000 for travel and new contracts.

Science Teachers to Ban Testing Harmful to Animals

Under pressure from animal welfare groups, two national science teachers associations have adopted guidelines that ban classroom experiments harming animals. The National Association of Biology Teachers and the National Science Teachers Association hope to end animal abuse in elementary and secondary schools and, in turn, discourage students from mishandling animals in home experiments and science fair projects.

Animal welfare groups are apparently most concerned with high school

students experimenting with animals in extracurricular projects. Barbara Orlans, president of the Scientists' Center for Animal Welfare, said students have been haphazardly performing surgery, testing known toxic substances, and running other pathology experiments on animals without even knowing normal physiology.

At one science fair, a student cut off the leg and tail of a lizard to demonstrate that only the tail can regenerate, she said. In another case, a student bound sparrows, starved them, and observed their behavior.

"The amount of abuse has been quite horrendous," Orlans said.

Administrators of major science fairs are short-tempered over the teachers' policy change and the impression it has created. The teachers "were sold a bill of goods by Barbara Orlans," said Thurman Grafton, who heads the rules committee for the International Science and Engineering Fair. "Backyard tabletop surgery is just nonsense." The new policies throw cold water on students' inquisitiveness, he said.

Grafton said he wouldn't deny there hasn't been animal abuse among projects at the international fair, but he added that judges reject contestants who have unnecessarily injured animals. The judges have a hard time monitoring local and regional fairs that may or may not choose to comply with the international fair's rules that stress proper care of animals, Grafton said.

He said that several years ago, the Westinghouse Science Talent Search banned harmful experiments to animals when sponsors threatened to cancel their support after animal welfare groups lobbied for change.

The teachers adopted the new policies also to fend off proposed legislation—in states including Missouri and New York—that would restrict or prohibit experiments on animals.

Officials of the two teachers' organizations say that they don't know how much animals have been abused in the classroom. On one hand, many biology teachers are not trained in the proper care of animals, said Wayne Moyer, executive director of the biology teachers' association. On the other, use of animals in experiments has dropped in recent years because of school budget cuts. The association may set up seminars to teach better animal care to its members.

Marjorie Sun