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THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEDICINE IN WARTIME¹

By Dr. FRED W. RANKIN

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MEDICAL EDUCATION

THE needs of both the military and the civilian population for adequate medical care emphasize the danger of reduction of either the present-day standards of medical practice or the number of physicians. At present approximately five thousand physicians are graduating yearly from the seventy-six accredited medical schools of the country. When one considers, however, that the loss due to death, retirement and other causes is approximately three thousand a year, it becomes apparent that it is impossible to build a reserve pool of any size in a short period.

¹ Concluding portion of the president's address before the American Medical Association at the ninety-third annual session, Atlantic City, N. J., June 9, 1942.

The standards of medical education in this country to-day undoubtedly are superior to those found in any other country in the world. Our public has available to it a quality of medical service elsewhere unsurpassed. One of the main problems in medical care is and has been for many years a distribution of talent, for admittedly the concentration of physicians in urban areas has been too great, whereas the dilution among rural populations has been a major and perplexing affair. However, this question of distribution of more physicians and of maintaining present medical standards is one which we can hardly expect to be satisfactorily solved during the present period. The method of production of more physicians and of maintaining present medical standards is one which

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