

# Grant to Seattle Medical School Will Aid Alaska and Northwest

By LAWRENCE K. ALTMAN

The University of Washington Medical School in Seattle has been awarded a grant of nearly \$1-million to develop a regional education program by establishing local teaching units in the basic sciences and in bedside medicine in Alaska and three other Pacific Northwest states, Quigg Newton, president of the Commonwealth Fund, announced here yesterday.

The aim of the program is to increase the number of physicians in the vast, sparsely settled states of Alaska, Washington, Montana and Idaho, whose only medical school is the University of Washington.

The program, Mr. Newton said, is expected to save time and money in increasing medical school enrollment without loss of quality in training.

He said the \$996,678 Commonwealth Fund grant to the University of Washington was in accordance with, but not in response to, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education report on reforms in medical education.

When it issued the report six weeks ago, the commission stressed, among other points, the need to disperse quality medical education and care to sparsely settled areas such as the Pacific Northwest and Alaska.

One way to attract young doctors to practice in areas where there are too few physicians, the commission said, is to encourage medical schools and community hospitals not only to train young doctors but also to provide continuing medical education for practicing physicians. Lack of opportunities to "keep up with medicine" is one reason why young practicing physicians tended to shun rural areas, the commission said.

"Experience has shown that medical graduates return to places where they have had their clinical [bedside] training," Dr. Robert Van Citters, dean of the University of Washington medical school, said.

The Carnegie Commission also said that costs of medical education could be cut by "combining science work on the campus and in the medical school, thus reducing duplication."

Such goals could be achieved through the program it is supporting, the Commonwealth Fund said, because of changes in the medical school curriculum begun at the University of Washington in 1968 under the direction of Dr. August G. Swanson.

The new curriculum has enabled the faculty to separate the sequence of studies that must be taught in the medical school in Seattle from those that can be taught as well elsewhere.

The Commonwealth Club

program will enable the University of Washington to transfer some subjects to local teaching units in the four states.

In the basic sciences, the school in Seattle will work with selected college and university biology departments in the region to teach University of Washington students studying in these four states subjects such as cellular and molecular biology. Such subjects can make up as much as one-third of a medical student's basic science studies.

Physicians at selected community hospitals will teach bedside medicine to students during their last two years of medical school and after their graduation.

About \$500,000 of the grant from the Commonwealth Fund, of 1 East 75th Street, will be allocated to establishing a basic sciences teaching unit at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks and two bedside teaching units in that state for 24 medical students each year.

The other half of the Commonwealth Fund grant will help support senior faculty at the University of Washington and set up three pilot clinical teaching units in the other three states.

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