

Item for Armed Forces Medical Policy Council - 5 Nov 51
Represented at meeting of 26 Nov 51

SUBJECT: Medical Research in the Defense Establishment

1. It has been suggested that the subject of medical research within the Defense Establishment be taken up at this time by the Council to determine the Council's wishes on establishing a policy.

2. The Charter of the Armed Forces Medical Policy Council assigns to the Council responsibility for plans, policies, and programs in the health and medical fields of the Armed Forces and for coordinating the efforts of the Armed Forces in those fields with similar efforts in civilian groups. The Department of Defense maintains its control over all research within the Armed Forces through the functioning of the Research and Development Board. The individual medical services have close contacts with the medical components of the Research and Development Board but the Council has none and up until the present time has never taken any action to interject itself into the medical research picture.

3. Control of all scientific research, including medical research, is very much coordinated already and presents a picture of many apparent complications. If the Council decides to interject itself into an already complicated system, it probably would wish to avoid, insofar as is practicable, any additional complicating factors. Briefly the routine as it exists now is as follows.

- a. Research projects are initiated by the individual medical services. They are then presented for approval to their respective Departments (Chiefs of Staff, USA and USAF, and CNO, Navy.)
- b. Those that are approved are so certified to the Research and Development Board. Here all approved medical projects are reviewed and coordinated by the Medical Sciences Committee and its five subsidiary panels:
 - (1) Panel on Aviation Medicine
 - (a) Subpanel on Vibration
 - (b) Subpanel on Aviation Personnel Equipment
 - (2) Panel on Shipboard and Submarine Medicine
 - (3) Panel on Military and Field Medicine
 - (4) Panel on Physiology
 - (5) Joint Panel on Medical Aspects of Atomic Energy

- c. Final action taken by the Research and Development Board is in the nature of recommending approval of the expenditure of research funds for units of programs.
- d. The Bureau of the Budget next takes the matter under consideration in making its recommendation to Congress for the necessary appropriations. The individual medical services are obligated to justify their requests with the Bureau of the Budget and with Congressional Committees. The Research and Development Board are not so obligated.

4. The medical services are primarily interested in the professional aspects of medical research. They have specific problems which it is their responsibility to solve. The Research and Development Board is interested in coordination and in the prevention of duplication but it is believed it is concerned more with programs of projects than it is with individual projects. It is also concerned with money. The interests of the Bureau of the Budget and Congress are purely financial.

5. It should be noted that the above is concerned entirely with projects and programs for which specific appropriated funds must be requested and expended. Research studies that can be carried out in existing military installations with funds, equipment and personnel allocated for routine operations do not necessarily require processing through these channels. They consist of studies which medical department personnel carry out in addition to their regular duties. All three services avail themselves of this opportunity for personnel to engage in such clinical and developmental work as can be accomplished within the limits of their routine operational resources. It is an excellent morale builder and frequently produces valuable results.

6. In addition to the Council's interest in meeting the obligations imposed by its Charter, it should give serious consideration to the future of medical research within the defense establishment. The Federal Security Agency is an important factor in the field. At the present time emphasis is upon medical problems having a military implication. The FSA has had to accept this situation in their efforts to secure research funds. The preferred position which the military services now enjoy will be quickly ended if and when the military emergency ceases to exist and the emphasis will be placed upon civilian problems. It has been predicted in some quarters that when this occurs the FSA will attempt to take over full responsibility for all federally sponsored medical research. The military services should, and no doubt will, vigorously resist the effort to lose control of their own research activities. Their case will be considerably strengthened, if there is a sound and tried medical research policy in being within the Defense Department.

7. A staff study has been made of the proposal to interject the Council into medical research and an inter-departmental agreement, has been reached along the following lines.

- a. That the Council agree upon a Department of Defense policy concerning medical research by stating the mission of medical research within the Armed Forces.
- b. By outlining the methods for implementing the policy.
- c. By requesting membership on the Medical Sciences Committee of the Research and Development Board for the Chairman of the Council and/or his alternate.

8. The matter has been coordinated with the Research and Development Board and the Chairman has agreed to Associate Membership for the Chairman and presumably for his alternate. Associate Membership, however, does not carry with it the privilege of voting. This relegates the Chairman to a position of inferiority on the Committee and may not be acceptable.

9. The following proposed directive has the concurrence of the Research representatives of the three services and is submitted herewith for the Council's consideration.

"I. Purpose.

The purpose of this directive is to establish the policy of the Department of Defense in the field of medical research within the military establishment.

"II. Mission.

The mission of the medical research within the Armed Forces is to encourage and maintain research and developmental activities in the medical, dental and allied sciences in support of the operational requirements of the military departments. Research programs will be directed toward the solution of problems affecting the health, safety, selection and efficiency of military personnel of the Defense Establishment.

"III. Implementation.

Coordination of this directive among the military departments will be the responsibility of the Armed Forces Medical Policy Council. Each military department will designate a qualified medical officer to meet at regular intervals with a representative of the Armed Forces Medical Policy Council, designated by the Chairman, to assist the Armed Forces Medical Policy Council in such coordination.

The military departments will administer their respective medical research installation in accordance with departmental policies and regulations.

The military departments will be responsible for project initiation and consummation in accordance with the established policies of the respective departments and of the Research and Development Board of the Department of Defense.

"IV. In order to assure maximum coordination of medical research with the total Department of Defense Research Program, membership on the Medical Sciences Committee of the Research and Development Board will be accorded the Chairman of the Armed Forces Medical Policy Council or his alternate."

10. It is believed that the above proposed directive will permit the Council to enter the research field without further complicating an already complicated situation. It permits the Council to exert its influence at two levels -- at the project initiating level and on the Medical Sciences Committee, Research and Development Board. The mechanism to accomplish the first is already in existence in an informal committee of representatives from the three services which meets at irregular intervals to discuss problems of mutual interest. The proposed policy would formalize the Committee and place it under the Council's supervision. The second is also already met partially by the offer of the Research and Development Board to accord Associate membership on its Medical Sciences Committee to the Chairman of the Armed Forces Medical Policy Council.

11. It should be noted that the interests of the Council in medical research are identical with those of the three medical services, that is, they are primarily professional rather than financial. Thus, interjecting the Council into the picture at the project initiating level appears to meet the primary responsibility.