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NOTES	VETERANS ADMINISTRATION 1947 P. 2/11	
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DEPARTMENT OF
MEDICINE AND SURGERY

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VETERANS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

December 3, 1947

YOUR FILE REFERENCE:

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Dr. Stafford Warren
Dean, University of California Medical School
Los Angeles, California

Dear Staff:

I regret very much that it has not been possible for me to prepare for you at an earlier date a summary of our activities from the time of the Central Advisory Committee meeting in September to the present and that this one has to be very sketchy.

You have received the packet of information sent out to all parties concerned with the planning and operation of the program. The preparation of this packet took more time than I liked but I thought it was necessary to present a uniform picture (a) to the Deans, (b) to their representatives and (c) to representatives within the individual hospitals or administrative offices who might be concerned. It has been fairly successful in accomplishing its mission. Comments from those concerned with planning and administration have been consistently favorable. Almost invariably they comment on the value of the clarification of the overall problem presented. Seeing the overall picture somewhat more clearly they are better able to understand our intentions as to the ways and means of circumventing the problems encountered.

It has required time for the Deans' Committees to consider the problems which we presented to them formally on November 4. The appointment of Radioisotope Committees was of necessity delayed because of this. All Deans' Committees have, however, been working toward this end as opportunity has permitted them to do so.

Since our September meeting I have been in personal contact with all of the Deans' Committees, and their representatives of the Deans' Committee and have as well visited all of the hospitals designated to establish Radioisotope Units except those in California.

In most instances the idea has been accepted with real enthusiasm. The interest has been, as we desired, particularly keen in the broad field of medicine, rather than confined to radiology. Everywhere interest is keen in research, particularly as it relates to clinical problems. In only two areas visited was there any question as to the feasibility of the program and in one of these (Boston) the primary concern was with regard to the

1170563

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- 2 -

Dr. Stafford Warren

December 3, 1947

availability of qualified personnel. I believe, however, in each of these two instances it will be possible to resolve the situation satisfactorily.

We could have proceeded temporarily much more rapidly had we been willing to by-pass the Deans' Committee and let certain eager individuals interested in this field proceed on their own. Eventually we would have lost heavily had we done so. Furthermore, this would not have been in accordance with our basic plan and in one, possibly two, instances it might have resulted in an embarrassing situation which might have prevented the Deans' Committee from exercising the responsibility we earnestly desired them to assume.

I had two meetings with Dr. Fitz (November 13 and 19). The Deans of the Boston medical schools attended the second of these meetings. They were particularly concerned about the relative dearth of qualified personnel in the Boston area in relation to the already great demand for such personnel in the universities. They were also concerned about the heavy demands now being made upon qualified key personnel like Dr. Shields Warren. It is likely that it will be possible to get something worked out to our mutual advantage and they are now studying the matter. I visited the Veterans Administration hospital, West Roxbury, Massachusetts and was quite pleased with the opportunities there. Dr. Morris Strauss (Medicine) was most enthusiastic. He believes qualified personnel can be obtained locally in adequate numbers to cover the plan envisaged. I believe a good unit can be developed there. As opportunity presents Dr. Shields Warren is giving this his attention. I am hoping to hear from them in the near future as to a more definite plan.

I met with Dr. McEwen (October 16) relative to the program at the Veterans Administration hospital Bronx, New York. They are now underway. Dr. Failla has been appointed as Chairman of the Radioisotope Committee and is assuming close relationship in organization and planning. Dr. Edith Quimby and he will also serve as Consultants. Dr. Failla is actively interested and has given strong recommendation to Dr. Roswit, a full time employee of the Veterans Administration hospital in charge of radiotherapy and actively interested in the radioisotope work. Dr. Failla recommended that he be designated as Director of the Radioisotope Unit. Dr. Failla has also recommended the part time appointment of Dr. Yallow as "attending biophysicist" and of Mrs. Newerly, full time as "Radiophysicists technician". The members contacted were actively interested in the establishment of a unit. Dr. Gluckman, Deans' Committee Liaison Officer was particularly helpful, and cognizant of my side of the picture. Dr. Shields Warren visited the Bronx hospital with me (October 16) and we were able to clear up some of the matters which have given me individual concern with regard to the set up there. This was, however, prior to the appointment of Dr. Failla as Chairman of the Radioisotope Committee and I believe the plans there are now sound.

1170564

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BOX NUMBER	#300 - SUBSERIES 3000-5
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NOTES	VETERANS ADMINISTRATION 1947 P. 3/4
FOUND BY	PERRY HALL

Dr. Stafford Warren

December 3, 1947

As yet we have heard nothing definite from the Cleveland group in regard to the Veterans Administration hospital (Crile). It may be that Dr. Friedell will be able to give us some information regarding the set up there in the near future. When I was there on July 30, Dr. Wearn was absent from the city but I went over the problems with Dr. Hayman and Dr. Friedell. At that time I could not present our formal plan as it had not yet been evolved.

I visited the Chicago group (August 21, November 11) in regard to the Veterans Administration hospital (Hines) and while I have received no firm recommendation from there it appears that Dr. LeRoy will be selected as the Director of the Radioisotope Unit. This was the intention of Dr. J. Roscoe Miller, representing the Deans' Committee, when I visited him (August 21). They have, as yet, presented no formal plan. They are undoubtedly nearly ready to do so.

I visited the Minneapolis group (November 10) in regard to the Veterans Administration hospital (Minneapolis) just before Dr. Cecil Watson left for South America. He was very interested and most helpful. Dr. Diehl representing the Deans' Committee arranged a splendid conference with those who would be particularly interested from the university and from the Veterans Administration hospital. They were most enthusiastic and are going ahead with the initial planning but no concrete recommendations have yet been received. They are to have Dr. Friedell come to consult with them in regard to certain technical problems at his and their convenience. Dr. Armstrong of the University staff who has been doing such fine work in Carbon 14, was particularly delighted and I feel very pleased about the prospects there and his association with our program. They intimate an interest in participating with us in a "hot" laboratory on Veterans Administration premises.

It has not been possible for me to get to Los Angeles as yet, however, I have been able to go over the problems of the Veterans Administration hospital (Van Nuys) personally with Dr. Stafford Warren on several occasions. The Deans' Committee has appointed Dr. Warren as Chairman of the Radioisotope Committee and Dr. W. H. Leake and Dr. Norman Nelson as members of the Radioisotope Committee to represent the Deans' Committee and to supervise the Radioisotope program in the Los Angeles area. Specific recommendations have been made and they cover not only the Veterans Administration hospital (Van Nuys) but as well a proposition for the Veterans Administration hospital (Los Angeles).

For Veterans Administration hospital (Van Nuys) Dr. George Leiby has been appointed by the Radioisotope Committee of the Deans' Committee to serve as Director of the Radioisotope Unit and Dr. Robert Fink and Dr. E. P. Rugbee as members to direct and to actively engage in the work within the hospital. They have presented some plans and requisitions but unfortunately they have

1170565

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FOUND BY	PERRY HARR	

- 4 -

Dr. Stafford Warren

December 3, 1947

been so interwoven with other items of concern to the general medical research program (which is in a similar stage of development as ours) that it has been impossible to get them unravelled in the paper work stage and effect prompt action on Central Office level. This is in part due to the requirements within the bookkeeping of the Central Office for restricting use of funds allocated for the radioisotope program specifically for that purpose as opposed to funds allocated specifically to be used in general medical research. It has been difficult to get the Van Nuys group to make proper differentiation in planning and in requisitions between use of radioisotope funds and use of general medical research funds. The former can not be employed to finance the latter. This difficulty while a real cause of delay is in the process of being resolved and should be straightened out in the near future. Dr. Warren has been in Washington this week and many things of this nature have been straightened out. Once the equipment is provided it will be possible for this group to do some excellent work. An additional activity of this unit will be an experimental effort to train two paraplegics who already have adequate technical background, so that they may work in the instrumentation aspects of radioactive materials and in tracer techniques. This unit has benefitted greatly from much personal attention from Dr. Warren.

The Radioisotope Committee (Los Angeles) has recommended the establishment of a unit at Veterans Administration hospital (Los Angeles) to serve as a committee to the Radioisotope Committee. It has been recommended that Dr. Roger O. Echberg serve as Chairman and Director of the Radioisotope Unit, with Dr. C. H. McClanahan and C. H. McIntyre as members. This is discussed in another letter.

I want to make comment on an interesting and heartening observation. In each of the areas wherein a unit is to be established there has been 100% interest and support from the Branch Medical Director, from the Hospital Manager and from other responsible personnel within the VA organization who would be in a position to assist us in our mission. I could never have dreamed that it would be so great or so real.

Within the hospitals the representatives of the Veterans Administration professional staff have shown great interest in the possibilities of a going radioisotope program. I was impressed more realistically than ever before with the opportunity this program can bring to them and what it can mean to them in the use of personal satisfaction due to the enrichment of their professional opportunities there. To me this realization on my part when considered in relation to their eagerness for this opportunity has been most stimulating. That this program could mean so much to these doctors in stimulating them and in making their professional life within the hospital more attractive, was never so fully appreciated by me before I made these visits. The caliber of men with whom I was in contact within

1170566

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COPY

- 5 -

Dr. Stafford Warren

December 3, 1947

these hospitals, and who were interested in the program, was such as to make me feel that they would do a good job of what ever we entrusted to them, that our confidence in them would be well justified and that our efforts in trying to bring interesting opportunities to them would be fully justified.

The Isotopes Branch, Atomic Energy Commission has been most helpful in assisting us in consultation and in supplying pertinent data. They are pleased with the effort we have made in attempting to establish a well organized and soundly conducted radioisotope program within the hospitals of the Veterans Administration.

I regret very much personally that it has not been possible to whip the entire program into being more quickly but the nature of it is such, and the problems that must be faced are such, that it has not been possible to do it more quickly.

I want to thank you for your assistance to me and I do hope you will feel free in giving me suggestions and criticisms for guidance.

With kind personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

George

GEORGE M. LYON, M. D.
Chief, Radioisotope Section
Research and Education Service

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