

Office of The Surgeon General
 Department of the Army
 24 April 1957, 0900 hrs.

MEDDH-MR

SUBJECT: Proposed Expansion of Research
 Investigations at Puerto Rico

1. DISCUSSION. Malnutrition and deficiency states observed in the civilian population of Puerto Rico present the opportunity for the accumulation of knowledge and experience concerning the care and treatment of individuals who have experienced severe traumatic wounds to the gastrointestinal tract that may be anticipated in the several types of warfare which may be encountered in the future. Inasmuch as these malnutrition deficiency states are not common in the areas in which considerable numbers of United States military forces are now stationed, it is desirable that the metabolic investigations be expanded in Puerto Rico in order to exploit the opportunity for studying individuals with sprue, by augmenting the Army Medical Service personnel now assigned to the Tropical Research Medical Laboratory. It is proposed that this research unit be based on Rodriguez Army Hospital, Puerto Rico as a Class II activity of the Office of The Surgeon General.

The proposed expansion would require the establishment of a Metabolic Ward of approximately 10 beds, an adjoining diet kitchen, as well as a chemistry and isotope laboratory, to be located at one of the presently vacant wards of Rodriguez Army Hospital. The cost of the alteration of the ward is estimated to be approximately \$50,000.00 and can be provided from Research and Development funds.

Providing the Caribbean Command and the Commanding Officer of Rodriguez Army Hospital are agreeable to these proposals, it is believed that discussions with Dean Hinman of the University of Puerto Rico should embrace the following points:

- a. From a legal viewpoint, it will be necessary to determine whether the University of Puerto Rico would be interested in a contractual arrangement whereby the University would agree to select from the Puerto Rican civilian population certain individuals with sprue and other nutritional or metabolic deficiency states for clinical and laboratory studies. Subsequent to the selection of these subjects, the University of Puerto Rico would provide these individuals with sprue to the medical personnel at Rodriguez Army Hospital. It is proposed that the University of Puerto Rico be reimbursed either on an actual cost basis or, if desired, on a basis of cost plus a reasonable profit.

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b. When the test subjects have been selected and gathered together by the University of Puerto Rico, it is proposed that a request be made under the provisions of AR 40-108 to the Secretary of the Army, seeking the authority to admit and maintain approximately ten subjects as a group to Rodriguez Army Hospital. If this authorization is obtained, it is proposed that each and every Puerto Rican test subject, prior to being admitted under this plan to Rodriguez Army Hospital, be required to execute a waiver of liability in favor of the United States Government for any act or injury arising out of, or in the course of, the proposed observation and treatment.

c. If it is desired that one or more Puerto Rican physicians or resident physicians of the University of Puerto Rico be allowed to participate in these metabolic research studies because of the potential benefits of increased knowledge accruing to those physicians participating in these sprue investigations, the employment of these physicians could be accomplished under the provisions of AR 40-103.

2. ACTION RECOMMENDED. It is recommended that the appropriate representatives of The Surgeon General discuss with the Commanding General, Caribbean Command, the Commanding Officer, Rodriguez Army Hospital, as well as the Dean of the University of Puerto Rico Medical School, the establishment of the Metabolic Research Unit of Tropical Research Medical Laboratory as discussed above.

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