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# REPORT OF THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT VISITING COMMITTEE
Brookhaven National Laboratory
September 20 and 21, 1951

The Committee is very much impressed by the accomplishments achieved in the past eighteen months. To have so quickly organized effective research along so many lines seems to the Committee exceptionally commendable. Of equal importance is the atmosphere which has been created in the care and for the comfort and wholesome mental attitude of the patients, including the children.

The Committee is glad to hear that there will soon be added to the Staff two individuals; one to take some of the administrative details of the Department, thus releasing the Director to a greater degree for his investigative and clinical work; the other a physicist to carry out physical measurements and radiologic techniques, and assist in study of the difficult problem of dosimetry. The Committee notes the recommendation(1) of the Visiting Committee of a year ago for a Division of Radiological Physics in the Medical Department. This Committee sees in the appointment of this physicist the initiation of activities, which, in the course of time, may require the establishment of a Division for their adequate expression.

The Committee wishes to emphasize its view that the development of the Staff to date has been carried out with outstanding good judgement. It is quite apparent that each Member added is being tested before he is given increasing responsibility; and the result to date is admirable.

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(1) - From the 1950 Report:

"In view of the special physical facilities available at Brookhaven it may be expected that most of the experimental studies will involve the use of radioactive isotopes and/or ionizing radiations. In the opinion of one of the members of the Committee, who has had extensive experience in this field, it is essential that plans be made now for a Division of Radiological Physics in the Medical Department. This division should be headed by a well trained man familiar with the subject and interested in such problems as other divisions may undertake, in order that all aspects of a common problem be expertly explored and prosecuted. The same purpose cannot be accomplished by occasional consultations with members of the Physics Department or other individuals at Brookhaven who are preoccupied with their own problems. Contacts with such persons will be very valuable to be sure - and this has been emphasized elsewhere in this report - but they cannot take the place of constant collaboration in all the research activities of the Medical Department. At the present time no radiological physicist with the proper qualifications is available. Therefore, the only thing that can be done is to make the necessary provisions in the plans for the permanent setup for a Division of Radiological Physics, to be developed and staffed at the first opportunity."

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The Committee recommends that as soon as the proper individual can be found by the Director that an Assistant to the Director be appointed whose clinical ability is adequate to share the Director's responsibility for the best care and treatment of the patients, including those being used in research. This responsibility is a heavy one, and one that can not be set aside for a single day. It is important that the Director have an adequate assistant in this field of his responsibility.

The Committee commends the Medical Department for its use of short-lived isotopes and the nuclear reactor in its investigative program; and for its recognition that the availability of these facilities at Brookhaven places this Medical Department in a unique position in medical research.

The Committee noted with satisfaction that the relationships being developed with other medical institutions: the arrangements with Memorial Hospital, with the Massachusetts General Hospital, and with medical schools permitting students to work at Brookhaven during their elective periods. The Committee hopes that, in addition to appointments on an annual basis, a continuation or increase of less-than-a-year appointments can be developed, thus extending the range of influence of this important laboratory in medical education throughout, at least, the north-eastern areaof the United States. The interest exhibited by the Medical Department in seizing its educational opportunities is gratifying.

The Committee recommends consideration of 2-day conferences, one or more times a year, to which selected men would be invited from widely distributed localities.

To set forth the type of openings and opportunities available from time to time in the Medical Department, the Committee recommends the preparation and distribution to universities and hospitals of a brochure which would give a brief description of positions to be held for a year or for less than a year, indicating the financial and housing arrangements available to the incumbents.

It seems clear that progress in clinical investigation must be preceded and supplemented by adequate animal experimentation. Important animal experimentation is in progress in the Divisions of the Department. The present facilities for housing and experimenting on animals will be inadequate for the variety and number of animals which should be used in the very near future. To delay providing such until the new hospital is developed would be very unfortunate. The Committee recommends immediate development of significantly increased facilities for care of, and experimentation on, animals, and without waiting for the development of the new hospital.

In spite of the most commendable development achieved and being extended in the present site of the hospital, never-the-less, the separation of the hospital from the nuclear reactor and the other major Departments of the Laboratory is a grave handicap. The Committee urges

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that construction of a new hospital close to the nuclear reactor be started and completed at the earliest possible time. That the hospital be close to the center of the Laboratory life in general is of supreme importance in the opinion of the Committee. This Committee agrees with its predecessor as to the size of the hospital which should be planned.(2)

Your Committee feels that very great importance should be attached to the influence of the Medical Department at Brookhaven upon the public attitude and support of the entire atomic energy program. This is peace-work and humanitarian effort: it is for the public a welcome release from thinking about war and destruction. The public quickly recognizes that here, of all places, new knowledge and techniques arising from the study and use of atomic energy can most quickly and effectively be applied for relief of disease. The public will readily recognize that the fullest use of the short-life isotopes can only be made in close proximity to their source. The vigor with which the use of short-life isotopes in diagnosis and treatment is being studied is profoundly impressive and promising. Obviously we must guard against hysterical demands for premature use of inadequately tested methods; but this can be done, and yet inform an ever widening group as to the great service being rendered by the Medical Department of Brookhaven National Laboratory.

_____ Herrman L. Blumgart

_____ G. Failla

_____ H. O. Fenn

_____ Colin M. MacLeod

/s/ J. Harold Austin J. Harold Austin,
Chairman

(2) - From the 1950 Report:

"The hospital should, we believe, have approximately 75 beds of which 15 should be kept for the care of employees and certain dependents and 60 beds should be assigned for research."

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