

Challenges to public health outlined

By DON MACK
Of the Emerald

"Only if we replace rhetoric by deeds can the future of public health be preserved."

This was the view of Dr. John Cippola, director of health planning, Oregon State Board of Health, who spoke before about 75 persons in the EMU ballroom Thursday.

Cippola, who called public health "the greatest challenge of the era," was one of ten guest speakers participating in a three-day symposium sponsored by the University School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation marking the school's 50th anniversary.

The health director said the phrase "health is a basic right" is meaningless unless followed up by actions. And if Americans believe those words, health must take national priority over such programs as arms spending and lunar missions, he said.

Public health in America is beset with problems stemming from failures in the medical care system, lack of money and

conflicting social values, Cippola said.

The medical care system in America was predicated on the family doctor concept, he said. Now, fewer general practitioners are graduating, patients are going directly to specialists and a medical manpower shortage is becoming critical.

"Neither federal, state or local governments have faced the fact that health is a basic right by backing that with money," Cippola charged. Oregon has the "dubious distinction" of allocating no money to local level health agencies, he said.

The professor of public health at Pacific University pointed out the incongruous situation existing today in which fewer scholarships are available for medical students while construction of health facilities continues.

Two theories of man's relationship to society have produced conflicting values which are damaging public health, Cippola said. The social responsibility theory says the

government has the responsibility of providing high public health standards, while the personal responsibility theory stresses the importance of individual initiative.

"The Elizabethan idea remains that the sick are sick and the poor are poor because they do not show the initiative to keep themselves healthy," he said.

Cippola called for a synthesis of the two value systems which would provide for personal initiative but demand social responsibility for federal, state and local government. "This requires a view of government as 'we' and not 'they.'"

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partnership health services, comprised of practising physicians from every medical specialty, should be the objective when planning the future of public health, he said.

The secret to resolution of public health problems "lies in the success of getting the five segments of society to move

toward their responsibilities," Cippola said.

He said the educational establishment, particularly medical schools, professional health organizations, private health agencies such as industry, the government, and individuals must be the segments of society willing to tackle present public health problems.

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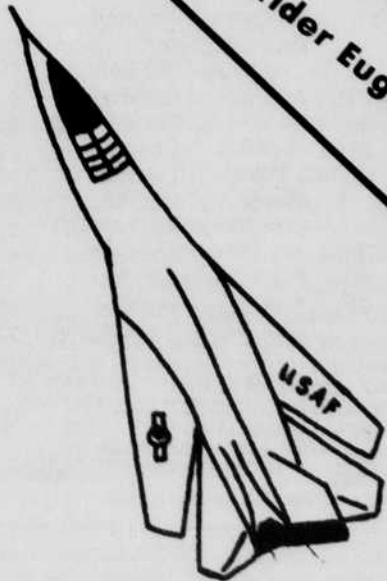
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