

Bates College

**SCARAB**

---

Speeches

Edmund S. Muskie Papers

---

5-27-1971

## **A Medical Bill of Rights - Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine**

Edmund S. Muskie

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scarab.bates.edu/msp>

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Muskie, Edmund S., "A Medical Bill of Rights - Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine" (1971). *Speeches*. 83.

<https://scarab.bates.edu/msp/83>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Edmund S. Muskie Papers at SCARAB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Speeches by an authorized administrator of SCARAB. For more information, please contact [batesscarab@bates.edu](mailto:batesscarab@bates.edu).

DR. BELKIN  
DR. SCHEINBERG  
CHAIRMAN BASSINE

BOARD OF OVERSEERS  
FACULTY  
STUDENTS FRIENDS

ALBERT EINSTEIN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

TOWN JAIL RESOLUTION NEW YORK CITY

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1971

"A MEDICAL BILL OF RIGHTS"

WHEN POLITICIANS SPEAK AT COLLEGE COMMENCEMENTS  
IN 1971, CAREFUL STUDENTS RAISE THEIR GUARD. YOU WONDER  
WHAT WE REALLY HAVE TO SAY -- AND WHETHER YOU SHOULD EVEN  
TRY TO LISTEN. THE WORLD IN YOUR TIME HAS LEFT YOU WITH  
A SURE SENSE OF SKEPTICISM ABOUT PUBLIC MEN AND POLITICAL  
LIFE.

A GRADUATE OF EINSTEIN HAS SEEN TOO MUCH IN  
RECENT YEARS TO ACCEPT VERY MUCH OF THE RHETORIC HE HEARS.

FOR AS LONG AS YOU HAVE BEEN IN COLLEGE, AMERICA  
HAS BEEN IN INDOCHINA. YOUR GENERATION HAS STOOD UP FOR  
PEACE -- AND YOUR PROTEST HAS PERSUADED MOST OF MY  
GENERATION TO OPPOSE THE WAR.

BUT STILL THE FIGHTING RAGES ON -- AND STILL OUR FREE  
SYSTEM FAILS TO BEND OUR POLICY TO THE WILL OF OUR PEOPLE.

FOR AS LONG AS YOU HAVE BEEN IN MEDICAL SCHOOL,  
YOU HAVE WITNESSED IN SOME NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE BRONX  
THE STARKEST EVIDENCE OF MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN. YOU  
LONG AGO HEARD THE PLEDGE OF NEW PRIORITIES -- BUT DAILY  
YOU ENCOUNTER MOTHERS WITHOUT FOOD, WORKERS WITHOUT  
WORK, AND CHILDREN HOOKED ON HEROIN. POLITICIANS HAVE  
ALWAYS MADE PROMISES TO THE SOUTH BRONX -- BUT THEY HAVE  
SELDOM MADE PROGRESS FOR THE FAMILIES WHO LIVE THERE.

FINALLY, FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN REMEMBER, THE  
STAIN OF RACIAL PREJUDICE HAS MOCKED OUR CLAIM TO  
NATIONAL EQUALITY. WE HAVE TALKED CIVIL RIGHTS AND  
SUPPORTED CIVIL RIGHTS AND EVEN PROCLAIMED CIVIL RIGHTS.  
BUT HOW WOULD WHITE AMERICANS NOW ANSWER PRESIDENT  
KENNEDY'S PROBING QUESTION: "WHICH OF US WOULD  
WILLINGLY TRADE PLACES WITH A BLACK MAN?"

SO I UNDERSTAND WHATEVER SKEPTICISM YOU BRING  
TO THIS CEREMONY TODAY. I KNOW THAT MY WORDS CANNOT ERASE  
YOUR DOUBTS. ONLY THE DEEDS OF GOVERNMENT IN THE YEARS  
AHEAD CAN RESTORE YOUR CONFIDENCE AND RENEW OUR COUNTRY.  
BUT I THINK WE CAN DO WHAT WE MUST -- AND I THINK THAT  
WE WILL. I THINK THAT ULTIMATELY AMERICA WILL TURN FROM  
THE TASKS OF DEATH ABROAD TO THE TASKS OF LIFE AT HOME.

I CANNOT PROVE MY CONVICTION. BUT I ASK YOU  
TO SHARE IT -- IN SPITE OF THE WRONG YOU HAVE SEEN --  
AND BECAUSE OF THE RIGHT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED. YOUR  
EDUCATION ALONE IS VITAL EVIDENCE OF AN ABILITY TO BUILD  
JUSTICE HERE IN AMERICA.

IN 1954, DR. SAMUEL BELKIN FOUNDED EINSTEIN,  
NOT ONLY BECAUSE NEW YORK CITY NEEDED ANOTHER HIGH  
QUALITY MEDICAL SCHOOL, BUT BECAUSE THE NATION NEEDED  
ANOTHER NON-DISCRIMINATORY MEDICAL SCHOOL.

HIS FAITH AND THE FAITH OF HIS FELLOW FOUNDERS CAN BE  
REDUCED TO A SINGLE, SIMPLE TRUTH. THEY BELIEVED THAT  
SOMETHING BETTER THAN BIAS SHOULD DETERMINE THE CHANCE  
TO LEARN HOW TO HEAL. THEY BELIEVED THAT GENERAL  
QUOTAS COULD NOT MEASURE INDIVIDUAL QUALIFICATIONS.  
AND THEY TRANSLATED THEIR BELIEF INTO A PLACE THAT IS  
FIRST RATE IN ITS PROFESSION AND FIRST RATE IN ITS  
PRINCIPLES.

IN 1971, EINSTEIN IS A QUIETLY ELOQUENT  
TESTAMENT TO THE GOOD THAT AMERICANS CAN CREATE. AND  
EINSTEIN'S REMARKABLE RECORD GIVES US REASON TO HOPE  
THAT OUR INSTITUTIONS CAN RESPOND TO OUR CONSCIENCE  
AND OUR SOCIAL CRISIS.

BETWEEN 1958 AND 1971, YOUR MEDICAL SCHOOL  
GRADUATED ONLY 15 BLACKS AND PUERTO RICANS. IN 1974  
ALONE, IT WILL GRADUATE 20.

THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT EINSTEIN IS NO LONGER WAITING FOR  
MINORITY APPLICATIONS. IT IS ACTIVELY SEEKING THEM --  
AND IT IS SUCCEEDING IN ITS SEARCH. YOUR INSTITUTION  
HAS DONE WHAT SOME SAY NO INSTITUTION CAN DO -- IT HAS  
ADAPTED THE PRACTICES OF THE PAST TO THE PRESENT AND  
THE FUTURE NEEDS OF PEOPLE.

BUT EINSTEIN'S RESPONSE HAS NOT BEEN LIMITED  
TO SERVING THE CAUSE OF RACIAL JUSTICE. THIS NEW  
COLLEGE HAS ALSO DISCARDED THE OLD PREJUDICE OF THE  
MEDICAL PROFESSION AGAINST WOMEN. TWENTY-NINE OF THEM  
BECOME DOCTORS HERE TODAY -- TWENTY-NINE MORE THAN  
ALMOST ANY MEDICAL SCHOOL WOULD HAVE WANTED OR ACCEPTED  
ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO. THEIR HANDS AND BRAINS WILL SAVE  
LIVES -- BECAUSE EINSTEIN HAS BROKEN WITH AN ANCIENT  
TRADITION THAT WAS WRONG FROM THE BEGINNING.

AND NOW EINSTEIN IS POINTING THE WAY TO  
FURTHER REFORM. IN RESPONSE TO THE SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS,  
IT IS INCREASING ITS ENROLLMENT AND REDUCING ITS COURSE  
OF STUDY. THE RESULT OF THE THREE-YEAR PROGRAM WILL  
BE MORE DOCTORS OF EQUAL COMPETENCE TRAINED IN LESS  
TIME. AND THE RESULT OF THAT WILL BE MORE HEALTH CARE  
FOR MORE AMERICANS.

ANYONE PRIVILEGED TO GRADUATE FROM EINSTEIN  
CANNOT BE COMPLETELY SKEPTICAL ABOUT INSTITUTIONS AND  
THEIR POTENTIAL TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF COMPASSION AND  
DECENCY. YOU SHOULD BE PROUD TO COME FROM A MEDICAL  
SCHOOL WHICH IS SERVING, NOT ONLY YOUR SPECIAL  
PROFESSION, BUT OUR ENTIRE SOCIETY. ITS EXAMPLE IS  
A LESSON TO TAKE WITH YOU AS YOU LEAVE HERE TODAY --  
A LESSON EQUAL TO ANY YOU HAVE LEARNED -- A LESSON AS  
IMPORTANT AS ANATOMY OR PHYSIOLOGY OR BIOCHEMISTRY.

FOR YOU, LIKE YOUR COLLEGE, HAVE A SOCIAL AS WELL AS A  
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE TO PERFORM.

THIS MORNING YOU RECEIVE A PIECE OF PAPER AND  
SWEAR A SOLEMN OATH THAT WILL PERMIT YOU TO CURE THE  
SICKNESS OF PEOPLE. BUT THE DIPLOMA AND THE OATH WILL  
REQUIRE SOMETHING MORE FROM EACH OF YOU -- A CONSTANT  
COMMITMENT TO CURE THE SICKNESS OF A MEDICAL CARE  
SYSTEM WHICH TOO OFTEN KEEPS DOCTORS AND THE PEOPLE WHO  
NEED DOCTORS FAR APART. THE TECHNICAL NAME FOR THE  
SYSTEM IS "HEALTH CARE DELIVERY." THE HUMAN REALITY  
BEHIND THE NAME IS PAINFULLY VISIBLE EVERYWHERE IN THIS  
CITY.

IN THE SOUTH BRONX, A YOUNG COUPLE DIPS INTO  
THEIR MEAGER SAVINGS, NOT TO SEND A SON TO SCHOOL, BUT  
TO BURY THEIR YOUNGEST CHILD.



IT IS NO CONSOLATION FOR THEM TO LEARN THAT THEIR  
NEIGHBORS SHARE THEIR SORROW -- THAT THE RATE OF INFANT  
MORTALITY IN THE SOUTH BRONX IS DOUBLE THE RATE OF  
COMMUNITIES TO THE NORTH.

IN BROWNSVILLE, A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD IS BROUGHT TO  
AN EMERGENCY ROOM WITH STOMACH CRAMPS FROM EATING LEAD  
PAINT. AFTER TREATMENT, HE IS RETURNED HOME TO MORE  
HUNGER -- AND TO A FURTHER RISK OF LEAD POISONING --  
A RISK THAT EACH YEAR BECOMES A REALITY FOR AT LEAST  
900 CHILDREN THROUGHOUT NEW YORK CITY.

ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE, A SPANISH SPEAKING  
MOTHER TAKES HER INJURED DAUGHTER TO THE HOSPITAL.  
AFTER WAITING AROUND FOR SEVEN HOURS, SHE IS TOLD IN  
WORDS SHE BARELY COMPREHENDS TO RETURN TOMORROW.  
SHE DOES NOT KNOW ENOUGH ENGLISH TO UNDERSTAND THE  
EXPLANATION THAT THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH DOCTORS.

ALL SHE IS LEFT WITH IS A WORRIED NIGHT ALONE WITH HER CHILD.

AND ON STATEN ISLAND, A WIDOW DISCOVERS THAT ALL THE INSURANCE AND INVESTMENTS OF YEARS HAVE BEEN DRAINED BY THE \$30,000 BILL FOR HER HUSBAND'S CANCER TREATMENTS. SHE IS DISCOVERING A HARD FACT OF LIFE AND DEATH IN AMERICA -- THAT SICKNESS IS OFTEN A FINANCIAL AS WELL AS A PHYSICAL CATASTROPHE.

MULTIPLY ALL THESE TRAGEDIES A HUNDRED FOLD -- REDUCE THEM TO CATEGORIES AND NUMBERS -- AND YOU WILL END UP WITH THE SAD STATISTICS OF A FAILING HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

-- BETWEEN 1966 AND 1980, THE NUMBER OF WORKERS WHO CANNOT WORK DUE TO ILLNESS WILL CLIMB FROM 18 MILLION TO 21 MILLION.

-- 75,000 NEWBORN BABIES DIE IN THE UNITED STATES EACH YEAR.

- 10 -

-- THE NUMBER OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS HAS DECLINED 35% SINCE 1957 -- AND FOREIGN PHYSICIANS NOW CONSTITUTE MORE THAN 25% OF OUR NATION'S DOCTORS.

-- 150 COUNTIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO HEALTH PROFESSIONALS OF ANY KIND. IN MOST CENTRAL CITIES, THE SITUATION IS AS BAD -- OR JUST A LITTLE BETTER. IN THE KENWOOD SECTION OF CHICAGO, THERE ARE ONLY TWO PHYSICIANS FOR 46,000 PEOPLE.

-- THE COST OF MEDICAL CARE HAS SKYROCKETED TO OVER \$60 BILLION ANNUALLY. AT THE SAME TIME, THE HEALTH INSURANCE INDUSTRY HAS USED ITS ACTUARIAL STUDIES TO EXCLUDE SEGMENT AFTER SEGMENT OF OUR SOCIETY FROM ACCESS TO MEDICAL PROTECTION. THE POOR ARE ABANDONED TO UNEVEN AND OFTEN INHUMAN PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES. AND THE MIDDLE CLASS IS CAUGHT SQUARELY IN THE MIDDLE -- TOO WELL-OFF TO QUALIFY FOR GOVERNMENT HELP -- TOO PRESSURED TO HELP THEMSELVES WITH COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE.

IN THE END, MILLIONS OF AMERICANS GO WITHOUT  
ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE. THEY CANNOT AFFORD IT. THEY ARE  
AFRAID IT WILL BREAK THEM. OR THEY CANNOT FIND A  
DOCTOR. SOME OF THEM DIE. OTHERS ARE LEFT DESTITUTE.  
AND MOST OF THEM ~~F~~ALL VICTIM TO NEEDLESS PAIN AND  
NEEDLESS SUFFERING. THEY ARE YOUR PARENTS OR MINE --  
YOUR CHILDREN OR MINE -- OUR FRIENDS AND OUR FELLOW  
CITIZENS.

THE DISASTER WE CALL MEDICAL SERVICES MAKES  
MOST AMERICANS FORGOTTEN AMERICANS. IT BETRAYS EACH  
OF THEM AND ALL OF US. OUR SYSTEM OF MEDICAL CARE IS  
IN FACT A SYSTEM OF MEDICAL NEGLECT. IT IS IN THE  
DEEPEST SENSE UN-AMERICAN.

DESPITE OUR POWER AND OUR STRENGTH, DESPITE  
OUR TRILLION DOLLAR G.N.P., WE HAVE LET YOUNG PEOPLE DIE  
BEFORE THEIR TIME AND OLD PEOPLE DIE WHEN THERE WAS SOME  
PRECIOUS TIME LEFT.

HOW WILL HISTORY JUDGE US, A COUNTRY WHICH WAS FIRST IN THE WEALTH OF ITS RESOURCES, BUT FAR FROM FIRST IN THE HEALTH OF ITS PEOPLE? AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW WILL WE JUDGE OURSELVES IN THOSE QUIET, INNER MOMENTS, WHEN WE REMEMBER THAT WHAT FINALLY COUNTS IS NOT HOW MUCH WE HAVE, BUT WHAT WE ARE?

IT IS TIME FOR US TO DO MORE UNTIL WE HAVE DONE ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE THE HEALTH OF OUR NATION.

COUNTLESS MEDICAL STUDENTS AND SOME DOCTORS HAVE ALREADY ANSWERED THE CALL TO A NEW KIND OF SERVICE. IN THE EARLY 1960s, STUDENT HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS FROM LOS ANGELES TO BOSTON PIONEERED CONCEPTS FOR COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE. IN THE SUMMER OF 1967, STUDENTS LIKE YOU JOINED TOGETHER IN NEW YORK CITY TO FOUND THE STUDENT HEALTH PROJECT OF THE SOUTH BRONX. THEIR HISTORIC INITIATIVE WAS A SIGN OF A NEW GENERATION'S DETERMINATION TO MAKE MEDICINE WORK FOR PEOPLE.

BUT THE YOUNG AND THE CONCERNED IN THE MEDICAL  
PROFESSION CANNOT DO THE WHOLE JOB ALONE. YOUR VOICES  
HAVE BEEN HEARD -- AND SOMETIMES EVEN HEDED. BUT YOUR  
OWN EFFORTS WILL TAKE TOO LONG. AND THE RESULTS WILL  
BE TOO UNCERTAIN. THE ONLY CERTAINTY IS THAT ENTRENCHED  
AND ESTABLISHED FORCES WILL OPPOSE YOU EVERY STEP OF  
THE WAY. WE CANNOT WAIT OR GAMBLE ON THE OUTCOME. HUMAN  
LIFE AND HUMAN HEALTH HANG IN THE BALANCE.

FOUR DECADES AFTER ORGANIZED MEDICINE ALMOST  
ADOPTED A REPORT FAVORING UNIFORM FINANCING FOR MEDICAL  
SERVICES -- FOUR DECADES AND A HUNDRED MILLION ILLNESSES  
TOO LATE -- WE MUST ENACT A MEDICAL BILL OF RIGHTS FOR  
ALL AMERICANS. THE CONSTITUTION COMMITS OUR COUNTRY TO  
PROTECT POLITICAL FREEDOM. NOW, BY LEGISLATION, THE  
CONGRESS MUST COMMIT AMERICA TO PROTECT THE PHYSICAL  
HEALTH WHICH ALONE MAKES POSSIBLE THE EXERCISE OF LIBERTY.

1.  
THE FIRST MEDICAL RIGHT OF ALL AMERICANS IS  
CARE WITHIN THEIR MEANS. ADMISSION TO A HOSPITAL OR A  
DOCTOR'S OFFICE SHOULD DEPEND ON THE STATE OF AN  
INDIVIDUAL'S HEALTH, NOT THE SIZE OF HIS WALLET. AND  
WE CANNOT DEPEND FOR REFORM ON HALF-WAY MEASURES AND  
HALF-HEARTED COMPROMISE. A RIGHT TO MEDICAL CARE WHICH  
LEFT THE BURDEN OF COST ON THE POOR AND THE NEAR POOR  
WOULD MOCK ITS OWN PURPOSE. THE ONLY SURE SECURITY IS  
FEDERALLY FUNDED UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE. THAT IS  
OUR BEST HOPE FOR THE FUTURE -- AND A PRIORITY GOAL IN  
1971.

WE MUST TAKE THE DOLLAR SIGN OUT OF MEDICAL  
CARE. WE MUST DESTROY THE FINANCIAL BARRIER BETWEEN  
DEPRIVED PEOPLE AND ESSENTIAL MEDICAL SERVICES. WE MUST  
END THE TERRIBLE CHOICE SO MANY AMERICANS FACE BETWEEN  
LOSING THEIR HEALTH AND LOSING THEIR SAVINGS.

12.  
THE SECOND MEDICAL RIGHT OF ALL AMERICANS IS

CARE WITHIN THEIR REACH. EVEN IF WE GUARANTEED THE  
PAYMENT OF HEALTH COSTS, MILLIONS OF OUR CITIZENS COULD  
NOT FIND SUFFICIENT MEDICAL SERVICES. THE SYSTEM IS  
NOT ONLY INEQUITABLE -- IT IS ALSO UNDERMANNED AND  
INEFFICIENT. IT IS ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE. THE NATION  
MUST NOW RESPOND WITH FEDERAL FINANCIAL INCENTIVES THAT  
WILL INSURE REAL REFORM.

THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH DOCTORS. BUT FEDERAL  
INCENTIVES CAN PERSUADE MEDICAL SCHOOLS TO FOLLOW  
EINSTEIN'S LEAD AND EXPAND THEIR ENROLLMENT. NEW SCHOOLS  
CAN BE CREATED AND SUSTAINED BY FEDERAL LOANS AND GRANTS.  
AND FEDERAL FUNDS MUST ALSO BE PROVIDED TO HELP MEDICAL  
STUDENTS WHO SHOULD HAVE SOMETHING BETTER THAN MONEY  
TO WORRY ABOUT.



A PROGRAM OF SCHOLARSHIP AID MUST INCLUDE ALL WHO ARE  
IN NEED -- AND IT MUST ENCOURAGE MINORITY STUDENTS WHO  
INTEND TO RETURN TO ~~THEIR~~ <sup>THEIR</sup> OLD NEIGHBORHOODS.

YET THE NUMBER OF DOCTORS IS NOT THE WHOLE  
ANSWER. IF WE PRODUCE 50,000 ADDITIONAL PHYSICIANS AND  
PLUG THEM INTO THE CURRENT STRUCTURE, OUR EFFORTS FOR  
REFORM WILL CERTAINLY FAIL. SOME OF THE HEALTH MANPOWER  
LEGISLATION NOW BEFORE THE CONGRESS WOULD DO JUST THAT --  
AND THE RESULT WOULD BE TOO MANY MORE DOCTORS SERVING  
TOO FEW PEOPLE AT TOO HIGH A COST.

HERE, TOO, CONGRESS MUST SET UP FINANCIAL  
INCENTIVES THAT CAN MOVE MEDICINE IN A NEW DIRECTION.  
WE MUST ENCOURAGE A SHIFT FROM A SYSTEM DEPENDENT ON  
THE INDIVIDUAL DOCTOR TO A SYSTEM BUILT AROUND THE CONCEPT  
OF THE HEALTH TEAM, COMPOSED OF PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS  
AND OTHER MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS.

TEAMS WOULD ALLOW US TO ALLOCATE MEDICAL RESOURCES WITH  
MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY AND TO MAXIMUM EFFECT. THEY WOULD  
EMPLOY PARAPROFESSIONALS TO RELIEVE NURSES AND DOCTORS  
FROM ROUTINE, TIME-CONSUMING TASKS. THEY WOULD GATHER  
TOGETHER DIVERSE SKILLS -- FROM INTERNISTS TO  
PEDIATRICIANS -- AND PATIENTS WOULD DEAL WITH THE TEAM,  
NOT JUST A SINGLE PHYSICIAN. EINSTEIN HAS EXPERIMENTED  
WITH THE HEALTH TEAM CONCEPT. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
MUST MAKE EINSTEIN'S EXPERIMENT NATIONAL POLICY.

AND HEALTH TEAMS MUST BE SUFFICIENT IN  
DISTRIBUTION AS WELL AS IN NUMBER. FEDERAL BONUSES  
MUST MAKE IT WORTHWHILE TO PRACTICE IN THE INNER CITY  
AND IN RURAL AMERICA. MEDICAL CARE CANNOT REACH PEOPLE  
UNLESS PEOPLE CAN REACH DOCTORS. AND PEOPLE MUST HAVE  
MORE THAN GEOGRAPHIC REACH. A HEALTH TEAM SHOULD ALSO  
BE SUBJECT TO THE REACH OF LOCAL INFLUENCE.

LOCATION INCENTIVES FOR HEALTH SERVICES MUST BE DESIGNED  
TO CREATE RESPONSIVE, PERSONAL STRUCTURES. IT WAS NEVER  
RIGHT -- AND IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE -- TO SATISFY  
AMERICANS WITH DISTANT, IMPERSONAL MEDICAL CARE. THE  
SYSTEM MUST RESPECT EVERYONE'S IDENTITY -- AND SACRIFICE  
NO ONE'S DIGNITY. AND WE MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT IT  
IS EASIER FOR A PATIENT TO REACH A HEALTH TEAM THAT HE  
KNOWS -- THAN A SHINING NEW MEDICAL CENTER WALLED OFF  
FROM SURROUNDING RURAL POVERTY OR A NEARBY URBAN GHETTO.

3. THE THIRD MEDICAL RIGHT OF ALL AMERICANS IS  
CARE WITHIN THEIR NEEDS. THE PRESENT HEALTH INSURANCE  
SYSTEM IS HEAVILY BIASED TOWARD HIGH-COST HOSPITAL  
TREATMENT AND AGAINST PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE. THAT IS  
INCREDIBLY EXPENSIVE -- AND INCREDIBLY INSENSITIVE TO  
THE REAL NEEDS OF PEOPLE. IT HAS FILLED HOSPITALS WITH  
PATIENTS WHO SHOULD NOT BE THERE AND WOULD BE BETTER OFF  
ELSEWHERE.

A NEW NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM MUST REVERSE THE OLD  
PRIORITIES. IT MUST GUARANTEE A RANGE OF MEDICAL  
SERVICES, COMPREHENSIVE IN SCOPE, PREVENTIVE IN  
EMPHASIS, AND RESTRICTED ONLY BY THE <sup>RANGE</sup> OF  
SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE.

AMERICA'S CONCERN OVER THE QUALITY OF HEALTH  
CARE HAS REACHED A HIGH WATER MARK IN 1971. YOU ARE  
GRADUATING FROM MEDICAL SCHOOL AT A TIME WHEN THE  
WHOLE MEDICAL PROFESSION MAY BE PROFOUNDLY ALTERED.  
YOU SHOULD WELCOME CHANGE -- AND WORK FOR CHANGE.  
ONLY IN THE CONTEXT OF A MEDICAL BILL OF RIGHTS FOR  
EVERY AMERICAN, CAN EACH OF YOU TRULY AND IN THE MOST  
LITERAL SENSE PROFESS YOUR PROFESSION -- WHICH IS  
NOTHING MORE AND NOTHING LESS THAN THE PROTECTION  
OF HUMAN LIFE.

AND THAT REQUIRES NOT JUST A MEDICAL BILL OF RIGHTS, BUT A SOCIAL BILL OF RIGHTS. THE REAL CURE FOR LEAD POISONING IS NOT HOSPITAL CARE, BUT DECENT HOUSING. THE MOST EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR MALNUTRITION IS ADEQUATE FOOD. AND THE BEST GUARANTEE OF GOOD HEALTH IS A PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.


AS HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, YOU MUST COMMIT YOURSELVES TO TOTAL HEALTH CARE. AND TOTAL CARE INCLUDES VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING THAT DETERMINES WHETHER WE ARE SICK OR WELL. YOU CANNOT CONFINE YOURSELVES TO THE TECHNICAL SKILLS YOU HAVE LEARNED HERE. YOU MUST ALSO PRACTICE THE FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN CONCERN OF A SCHOOL LIKE EINSTEIN.

YOU MUST SPEAK OUT FOR A FAIR AND SENSIBLE MEDICAL CARE SYSTEM.

YOU MUST STAND UP FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS AND FOR  
PEOPLE -- WHETHER THEY ARE YOUR PATIENTS OR MIGRANT  
WORKERS TWO THOUSAND MILES AWAY.

YOU CAN CURE INDIVIDUALS -- AND YOU MUST HELP  
AMERICA BUILD A COMPASSIONATE SOCIETY.

IT WILL TAKE TIME. THERE WILL BE SETBACKS AND  
FRUSTRATIONS AND DEFEATS. BUT MEN AND WOMEN WHO COME  
FROM EINSTEIN HAVE GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT WE CAN  
FINALLY FASHION A COUNTRY THAT IS GREAT ENOUGH TO BE  
GOOD. YOU HAVE SEEN IN YOUR OWN LIVES WHAT A DIFFERENCE  
ONE SCHOOL CAN MAKE. NOW ALL OF YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO  
MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS.

THE PRACTICE YOU CHOOSE AND THE PRACTICES YOU  
FOLLOW MAY NOT CHANGE OUR COUNTRY OVERNIGHT. 

BUT YOU CAN REMIND US BY EXAMPLE OF ARISTOTLE'S ANCIENT TRUTH: "HEALTH OF MIND AND BODY IS SO FUNDAMENTAL TO THE GOOD LIFE THAT IF WE BELIEVE MEN HAVE ANY PERSONAL RIGHTS AT ALL AS HUMAN BEINGS, THEY HAVE AN ABSOLUTE MORAL RIGHT TO THE MEASURE OF GOOD HEALTH THAT SOCIETY IS ABLE TO GIVE THEM."

THAT IS OUR CHALLENGE AND OUR CHANCE. TWO THOUSAND YEARS AFTER ARISTOTLE WROTE, WE MUST SECURE A MEDICAL BILL OF RIGHTS FOR OUR OWN PEOPLE. WE CAN WAIT NO LONGER -- IN HEALTH CARE OR IN SOCIETY. IN OUR INDIVIDUAL LIVES AND IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE, WHATEVER WE CAN DO, AND WHATEVER WE DREAM WE CAN DO, WE MUST BEGIN NOW.

\*\*\*\*\*