



President's Message

By Monroe T. Morgan, Dr. P.H.

What our profession needs is more humanitarians and more people with tenacity and a sincere desire to work hard to build a brighter future and encourage devotion to the profession. There are not enough people in the profession who have these attributes and they need help from other "professional sanitarians."

For many years, we have been working to get professional degree programs in environmental health and the consequential esoteric body of knowledge. These degree programs are necessary if we are to elevate the status of the sanitarian (environmentalist). Some have worked long hard hours to build their profession, but have tended to go it alone without utilizing other professions. The scope of environmental health practice has been limited. In many cases, we have tried to solve problems from the enforcement and technological standpoints only. In few cases, have we attacked the problems comprehensively from the educational, sociological, health, technological, economic, managerial, and political aspects, but environmental health problems should be solved from these seven aspects.

Environmental sanitarians have seldom attacked problems from the political aspect. We appear to think that this is someone else's area and politics is not for us. Yes, we have come a long way. We have made great progress, but not enough and not rapidly enough? Have we arrived at the dock and found the boat has departed?

Since few states have adequate educational requirements and none require a degree in "environmental health" for beginning sanitarians and environmentalists, we have new and growing problems. Let's look at this situation.

No state requires a degree in "environmental health" for beginning positions. *I believe that every state in the*

United States should require a degree in environmental health as a minimum requirement for employment as a sanitarian or environmentalist. Most other professions require a degree in their field. The United States Department of Labor has recently classified sanitarians in a non-professional category based on educational requirements and indicates that our work is of a check-sheet nature. Because of our apathy, some states are lowering educational requirements for entry level positions.

Many sanitarians opposed changing the name of this association and efforts to make this an umbrella organization for the total environmental health field. I think this opposition has impeded progress and that consequently many environmental health programs are located in EPA, Agriculture, HUD, Interior, and the Food and Drug Administration.

For example, the Food and Drug Administration has few positions entitled, "Sanitarian." However, FDA is employing people daily in such capacities as consumer safety officer and health inspector. These people are practicing environmental health in the areas of milk, food, and product safety. These people do not see our association as the association of their profession and their expertise is not available to us.

Because we have been complacent, new positions in EPA are being filled with persons whose majors were other than "environmental health" when they should be filled with "environmental health" graduates. The work is definitely environmental health and the type for which our colleges are preparing people.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has programs in home safety, environmental design, toy safety, fire safety, environmental safety and accident prevention which should be using

sanitarians and environmentalists. However, in most cases it is not, perhaps because we have been so long getting to the port.

Yes, we have done a good job taking water samples, approving sewage systems, inspecting restaurants, and such. However, many environmental health concerns have moved along rapidly, and in many cases, we have lost much because we have not applied ourselves collectively, cooperatively, unitedly, and politically. In other words, we have not put forth a good effort from the educational, sociological, health, technological, economic, managerial, and political aspects.

Recently, I served as chairman of a task force to determine the availability of funds for environmental health training in the United States. The results of that study revealed that, at the federal level, funds for environmental health training either ended June 30, 1974 or will be depleted June 30, 1975. The health manpower legislation proposed in 1974 allowed little money for training environmental health manpower, while such programs as medicine, nursing, dentistry, and osteopathy would have been funded sufficiently.

The National Health Planning and Resource Development Act of 1974 has designated few funds for environmental health. In fact, the words "environmental health" are almost non-existent in the legislation. The proposed federal budget for DHEW is indicative of the trend. The budget provides even more funds for those programs that provide restorative care (curative medicine) but even less funds for environmental health, public health, and preventive medicine. Even the environmental health funds for the Indian Health Service are to be cut \$3 million. Preventive health funds are to be cut \$10 million over last year, while Medicaid will increase \$567 million and Medicare \$1,037 million. The National Health Service Corps has provisions for areas of curative medicine, nursing, etc., but funds to train sanitarians and other personnel to control man's "home" are extremely small.

As one assesses the federal legislation, reads the papers, and talks with politicians, it becomes apparent that this nation is concerned with providing care for the sick. Environmental health and preventive medicine and other prevention programs are far back in the thoughts,

writings, legislation and budgets in this country, when what we need is more emphasis on environmental health and preventive medicine. Let's act on the fact that \$5 invested in environmental health and preventive medicine will prevent spending \$100 for curative medicine. Which is cheaper, and which does the public want?

We must approach the problem of overemphasis on curative medicine and the debasing of environmental health and preventive medicine from the seven aspects — educational, sociological, health, technological, economic, managerial, and political. Maybe what this country needs is to ask the public some direct, point blank, questions or maybe we need to conduct a national survey asking the public "Which do you want, environmental health and preventive medicine or curative medicine? and, Which do you want, to be healthy and live in an environment conducive to good health with the necessary preventive measures and medical programs available or to be ill, suffering, diseased and hospitalized but well able to pay the bills." And another question should be asked: "Which do you want, the properly proportioned amount of environmental health and preventive medicine programs in conjunction with the necessary curative medicine programs, or only curative medicine?" I think most people in the United States would vote for the former. Then, if that is what they want, the nation should endeavor to fulfill their wishes. A national health insurance program would help many people but it would be more beneficial to have the necessary environmental health and preventive medicine programs.

Now, back to the earlier theme. Will the sanitarians and environmentalists, using the approach from the seven aforementioned aspects, be able to "overtake the boat" and find their role in the health care system of this nation? Will they become managers, programmers, administrators, planners, and politicians as they should? Many already are, but the number is a long way from sufficient.

What is the future of the environmental sanitarian? It is what you and I and our fellow sanitarians and environmentalists make it. To make the future of the sanitarian what mankind expects and needs will require strong local, state and national environmental health associations working together. The future will re-

quire more than 90 percent of the environmental health practitioners to support their associations and have a part in the development of the future. To accomplish what we should will require that we put forth a 100 percent effort 100 percent of the time.

Jerry Kirschbaum, president, Nonfluid Oil Corporation, recently said, "Technology will either bury us or save us. . . . Taking care of the machinery of our lives is the key" to the future of our country. He is concerned with maintenance of the machinery. Sanitarians are responsible for the maintenance of the homes and health of those who operate and maintain the machinery.

Environmental management and maintenance positions will be filled in the future, and environmental surveillance will be available, but the question is, "Will they be filled by sanitarians and environmentalists?" If it is to be by sanitarians and environmentalists, we must unite soon and pool our talent and attack the problems from the educational, sociological, health, technological, economic, managerial, and political aspects.

Like I said earlier, most of those who should will never read this message. Therefore, please loan them your *Journal* and ask them to read it. Then ask them to please join their state and national associations and help, because in so doing they will be helping the public, themselves, and those unborn at this point in time.

It was my pleasure to visit the University of Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg recently to assist in developing a baccalaureate degree program in environmental health. They are planning to implement the program in September of 1975.

The endeavor of a unification of the National Environmental Health Association and International Association of Milk and Food and Environmental Sanitarians, Inc. is still active. The International Association of Milk, Food and Environmental Sanitarians, Inc. was not able to meet with our Executive Committee in Denver on April 7-8, 1975. However, attempts are being made to have a joint meeting in Washington, D.C. during the second week of June, 1975.

As President of the National Environmental Health Association, I look forward to participating in future state association educational conferences. On Friday, April 11, 1975, I will speak to the California Environmental Health Association while en-

joying the environs of Fresno, California. I am anxious to renew friendship with my friends in Ohio as I keynote the Ohio Environmental Health Association on April 22, 1975 in Columbus, Ohio. Sunny Orlando, Florida is the location of the 1975 Florida Environmental Health Association meeting which it is my pleasure to keynote on May 14, 1975. I am honored to be invited "home" to speak to the Virginia Environmental Health Association on May 24, 1975. On June 5th I return to my native state to address the Western North Carolina Environmental Health Association at Blowing Rock.

An important step toward filling the environmental information gap in the U. S. House of Representatives is the appointment of an 11 member Environmental Study Conference. This group is to provide a "vehicle for the collection and dissemination of environmental information for members of the House, especially as it relates to congressional and legislative business." It will provide members interested in the environment with a vehicle for furthering their legislative goals; seek information about environment from sources outside Congress for use by ESC members; follow closely the status of environmentally significant legislation and alert ESC members when the bills are being considered in committee or on the House floor.

Members of the Environmental Study Conference are: Representatives Richard L. Ottinger (D.-N.Y.); H. John Heinz, III (R.-Pa.); John Dingell (D.-Mich.); Gilbert Gude (R.-Md.); Ken Hechler (D.-W. Va.); Larry Pressler (R.-S.D.); Henry S. Reuss (D.-Wis.); Alan Steelman (R.-Tex.); Guy Vander Jagt (R.-Mich.); Charles A. Vanik (D.-Ohio); Timothy E. Wirth (D.-Colo.).

We thank these congressmen for the formation of a bi-partisan Environmental Study Conference and offer our assistance to them and other members of Congress, whatever their interests.

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale again will hold The Environmental Health Training Institute. Dates are May 5-May 23. Grant funds provide room, board, tuition, books and supplies. Trainees provide own travel. Contact Andrew H. Marcec at the University, 315 W. Grand, Carbondale, Ill. 62901.