

A REPORT ON INTER-PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP WORK IN WISCONSIN.*

BY RALPH W. CLARK.¹

During the time since the Madison meeting of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION, two senior thesis students, Gerald Belisle and Wilbur Dehmer, a committee of the Wisconsin Pharmaceutical Association consisting of three physicians, three dentists and three pharmacists, and the writer have worked with some regularity on inter-professional relationship. To start the work, a meeting was held in Madison during the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION convention in order to familiarize the members of the state committee with the national scope of the problem and the character of the work being done, by hearing Dr. Fantus and Dean Schicks speak on the physician and the dentist, respectively, in relation to the pharmacist.

The relationship between the physician and the pharmacist was discussed in a paper by the writer, Wilbur Dehmer coöperating, in the January *Wisconsin Druggist*. A full-page editorial in the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* for April commented favorably on this discussion and indicated the willingness of the physicians to coöperate. The writer has been asked to contribute to the latter magazine.

The relationship between the dentist and the pharmacist was presented in a paper by the writer, Gerald Belisle coöperating, in the April *Wisconsin Druggist*.

A meeting of the inter-professional relationship committee was held in Milwaukee in January at which Dr. Frank B. Kirby addressed the group. An informal discussion followed with druggists, physicians and dentists taking part. The members of the executive committee and the officers of the Wisconsin Pharmaceutical Association were present and physician and dentist members of the committee and guests.

An interesting program has been planned for the balance of the year. Rho Chi sponsors an annual open spring meeting at the University of Wisconsin. This year the meeting is to be turned into an inter-professional relationship discussion. Dr. Frank B. Kirby, M.D., director of Education of the Abbott Laboratories; H. P. Greeley, M.D., Madison, member of the editorial board of the *Wisconsin Medical Journal*; O. M. Dresen, D.D.S., Milwaukee, practicing dentist and member of the faculty of the Marquette Dental College; and Otto H. Berndt, president of the Wisconsin Pharmaceutical Association, will speak. A meeting of the executive committee of the Wisconsin Pharmaceutical Association has been called in Madison on May 22nd,² to bring these men to attend the Rho Chi gathering. University pharmacy students and local druggists, physicians and dentists are being invited. Displays of interest to physicians and dentists will be shown.

A portion of the Wisconsin Pharmaceutical Association convention program

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² The meeting has been held, but the paper is printed to present this type of work. This meeting and similar ones he'd in other cities were well attended and were characterized by enthusiasm on the part of those present.—EDITOR.

is also to be given over to a similar discussion. Following the writer's report of his committee work, Dr. Kirby will speak. He will be followed by Dr. J. C. Sargent, M.D., Milwaukee, a member of the committee and Dr. Dresen, who has consented to appear on this program also. This part of the convention program was considered by many who attended, as one of the high spots of a paper read by the writer at the State Medical Society meeting on September 12th.

The above concludes the report of work done this year in Wisconsin on inter-professional relationship. The writer wishes to add a few comments which may provoke discussion.

The inter-professional relationship between physician and pharmacist has been a problem which has always occupied the minds of members of these professions. Pharmaceutical journals of both the popular and professional types, as well as medical journals, have devoted many pages to the subject. Recently, there has been a renewed and comprehensive attack on the relationship between these two kindred professions.

The inter-professional relationship between dentist and pharmacist, on the other hand, has been discussed only, comparatively, recently. Extensive work, in this field, has been done by George C. Shicks, Assistant Dean, Rutgers University, College of Pharmacy, and others since 1930.

Why not also include veterinarians? With the "back to horse" movement in farming territory, diseases and injuries to these as well as other domestic animals and pets call for medication which the small town druggist could and should prepare.

The writer believes that the real problem is to get the pharmacist to approach the physician or dentist in the proper way, knowing first that his own house is in order. This problem can be handled only by means of an educational campaign along these lines carried on in the pharmaceutical press. Recently, a great amount of material has been contributed pointing out methods of approach but neglecting emphasis on the fact that the pharmacist must put his own house in order, which includes discontinuing, to a large extent, counter prescribing and featuring of patent medicines and solving the problem of irregular prescription prices. Then, quoting Glenn Frank, "there is no reason why, as independent pharmacists, . . . they should cease to be upstanding, independent factors in the economic life of this Commonwealth."

A serious obstacle to overcome is the fact that various pharmaceutical manufacturers detail physicians and dentists. Members of these professions would welcome a visit from their favorite pharmacist who could in this manner reduce the number of preparations prescribed and carried on his shelves. In the long run who would suffer? By and large, nobody. A certain pharmaceutical house might conceivably lose out in one case and gain in another.

In conclusion, the writer is of the opinion that although much can be done with this work by holding joint state and national meetings or as Dr. Kirby suggests, joint conventions with sections for the various professions; the real, final work must be done by and between individuals.
