

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH: NEW PROBLEMS, NEW RESPONSES
FOR THE 1980s

BY

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CONTINUES TO BE AN IMPORTANT GOAL FOR OUR SOCIETY AND A PRIORITY ISSUE FOR THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. SINCE THE LATE 1960s AND EARLY 1970s, THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY FAVOR EFFORTS REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH. NATIONAL POLLS HAVE CONSISTENTLY INDICATED THIS INTEREST. QUITE RECENTLY, A 1981 SURVEY BY THE LOU HARRIS ORGANIZATION AGAIN INDICATED THAT A LARGE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS, FOR EXAMPLE, SUPPORT THE CURRENT PROVISIONS OF THE CLEAN AIR AND CLEAN WATER ACTS, AND MANY FAVOR MAKING THE LAWS EVEN STRICTER. BY 86% TO 12%, THOSE SURVEYED OPPOSE MAKING THE AIR ACT LESS STRICT; AND BY 93% TO 4% THEY OPPOSE EASING UP ON ENVIRONMENTAL RULES GOVERNING WATER POLLUTION, THE SURVEY FOUND.

THE PUBLIC OPINION REGARDING AIR AND WATER QUALITY IS ALSO REFLECTED IN OPINIONS REGARDING OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION ATTACKS ON, AND CUTS IN, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS INDICATE THEY ARE NOT LIBERAL, NOT CONSERVATIVE, BUT ARE TRULY RADICAL IN TERMS OF SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN ORDER TO ATTEMPT TO SATISFY THE SELFISH, SHORT-SIGHTED INTERESTS OF THE ELITE POLLUTERS.

BUT BEFORE GOING FURTHER, I SHOULD SET THE STAGE FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS BY DEFINING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS. ENVIRONMENTAL

PREPARED FOR A SESSION ENTITLED "PROJECTED CHANGES IN PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING IN THE DECADE OF THE 1980s", APHA, NOVEMBER 3, 1981, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

HEALTH PROGRAMS ARE ORGANIZED GROUPINGS OF ACTIVITIES OR METHODS DESIGNED TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE HEALTH, COMFORT, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING BY MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT. WITHIN THIS DEFINITION, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, AIR POLLUTION CONTROL, WATER POLLUTION CONTROL, SAFE DRINKING WATER, HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT, SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, RADIATION PROTECTION, RECREATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, SWIMMING POOL SANITATION AND SAFETY, HOUSING CONSERVATION AND REHABILITATION, NOISE POLLUTION CONTROL, FOOD PROTECTION, AND INSECT AND RODENT CONTROL.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS INCLUDE NOT ONLY THOSE WORKING AND MANAGING SUCH PROGRAMS, BUT ALSO THOSE ACADEMICIANS PRODUCING SUCH PERSONNEL AND THOSE RESEARCH SCIENTISTS DEVELOPING THE NECESSARY BASIC HEALTH DATA. THE SPECTRUM OF SUCH PERSONNEL RANGES FROM INSPECTIONAL LEVEL SUB-BACCALAUREATE PERSONNEL PERFORMING ROUTINE INSPECTION AND SAMPLING, THROUGH THE BACCALAUREATE, MASTER'S, AND DOCTORAL LEVEL PERSONNEL REQUIRED FOR THE MORE COMPLEX AND SOPHISTICATED ASPECTS OF POLICY, MANAGEMENT, RESEARCH, AND EDUCATION. THE TYPES OF PERSONNEL REQUIRED MUST INCLUDE THOSE HAVING MAJOR EMPHASIS IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ENGINEERING, HEALTH PHYSICS, INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE, GEOLOGY, HYDROLOGY, ENTOMOLOGY, MICROBIOLOGY, EPIDEMIOLOGY, MEDICINE, LAW, ECONOMICS, TOXICOLOGY, AND PLANNING. SUCH A DIVERSITY OF GROUPS IS NOT ONLY DESIRABLE, BUT ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL WHEN ONE UNDERSTANDS THE SCOPE,

THE MAGNITUDE, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH TO THIS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

IT IS KNOWN AND WELL DOCUMENTED THAT THE COMPLEXITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AND THE TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DELIVERY SYSTEM IS INCREASING, RESULTING IN NEEDS AND DEMANDS FOR ADDITIONAL TYPES OF PERSONNEL AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS. CHANGES HAVE BEEN, AND ARE BEING CREATED BY CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, EVOLVING SOCIETAL VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS, BETTER DEFINED AND UNDERSTOOD ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRIORITIES, AND THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF A BROAD ARRAY OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONS. GREATER RECOGNITION HAS ALSO BEEN GIVEN TO THE PREMISE THAT IMPROVED MANAGERIAL SKILLS WILL IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DELIVERY SYSTEM.

THE CHANGES IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY CHANGES IN PERSONNEL NEEDS, PROGRAMS, AND ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDE THE DECREASES IN COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AS MAJOR CAUSES OF DEATH; THE AGING OF OUR POPULATION WITH ASSOCIATED INCREASE IN A MULTITUDE OF CHRONIC DISEASES; AND INCREASED RECOGNITION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS AND STRESSES IN TERMS OF CANCER, HEART DISEASE, AND GENETIC EFFECTS. ADDITIONALLY, THE INCREASING REALIZATION THAT THE BEST ANSWER TO PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS LIES IN PREVENTION HAS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE, AN EFFECT ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL NEEDS, PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS.

THE GOAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS IS TO INSURE AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH WILL CONFER OPTIMAL HEALTH, COMFORT, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING ON THIS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. SOME ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN SO TUNNEL-VISIONED IN CONSIDERING ONLY

THE HEALTH ASPECTS OF VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS THAT THEY HAVE HELPED CREATE AND PROMOTE THE FRAGMENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS TO VARIOUS SPECIAL DISTRICTS AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTALLY-ORIENTED AGENCIES WHICH ARE WILLING TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS IN A COMPREHENSIVE FASHION. MOST HEALTH AGENCIES WERE APPARENTLY NOT WILLING TO DEAL WITH BOTH OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, WITH THE RESULT BEING THAT MY OWN DEPARTMENT SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY "HEALTH AGENCY" IN THE NATION ADMINISTERING A FEDERALLY APPROVED OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM. MOST SUCH PROGRAMS ARE ADMINISTERED BY A LABOR DEPARTMENT OR SOME AGENCY OTHER THAN A HEALTH AGENCY.

THE LACK OF FIRM, EXPLICIT AND PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT FOUNDATIONS FOR MANY OF OUR NATION'S FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS HAS BEEN ALL TOO OBVIOUS IN RECENT YEARS. THIS WEAKNESS HAS BEEN PINPOINTED AND NOTICEABLE DURING THE "DECADE OF THE ENVIRONMENT" WHICH BEGAN IN THE LATE 60s. THERE IS NO LONGER ANY DOUBT THAT THE ENVIRONMENT MUST AND WILL BE MANAGED. THE ONLY REMAINING QUESTIONS RELATE TO "HOW" AND "BY WHOM". TRADITIONALLY, TRAINED AND EXPERIENCED "ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTHERS" HAVE FREQUENTLY NOT EXHIBITED THE MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE AND CAPABILITY TO COPE WITH OR SHOW LEADERSHIP REGARDING THE NEW-FOUND PUBLIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURES, ORGANIZATIONAL TRENDS, EXPANDED PROGRAM METHODOLOGY, LEGISLATIVE DEMANDS AND MANDATES, BROADENED SCOPE, AND EVOLVING PROGRAM GOALS. FREQUENTLY, OUR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH LEADERS HAVE BEEN VIEWED AS NEGATIVE OBSTRUCTIONISTS RATHER THAN CONSTRUCTIVE LEADERS, AND HAVE EXHIBITED TERRITORIAL DEFENSE MECHANISMS IN LIEU OF CREATING, PROMOTING, AND JUSTIFYING EFFECTIVE

PROGRAM AND ORGANIZATION CONCEPTS TO MEET THE PUBLIC CLAMOR FOR A QUALITY ENVIRONMENT. "THERE GO MY PEOPLE AND I AM THEIR LEADER" HAS BECOME A TRUISM.

MOST ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS ACCOMPLISH A FAIR TO EXCELLENT JOB OF TRAINING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL IN THE TECHNICAL INTRICACIES OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH. GRADUATES CAN SPOUT FACTS ABOUT PPM, HALF-LIVES, TIME-TEMPERATURE RELATIONSHIPS, B.O.D., ETC., BUT FEW SUCH PROGRAMS PERFORM A REASONABLE JOB OF PRODUCING GRADUATES KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE APPLICATION OF SUCH TECHNICAL INFORMATION IN TERMS OF POLITICAL PROCESS, MANAGEMENT, SUPERVISION, ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR, PUBLIC RELATIONS, INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS, AND THE PLANNING PROCESS.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORK FORCE NOT ONLY INCLUDES PERSONNEL IN SO-CALLED "HEALTH AGENCIES", BUT ALSO IN INDUSTRY, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, AND SUCH DIVERSE GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AS INTERIOR, AGRICULTURE, TRANSPORTATION, URBAN RENEWAL, THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION, PLANNING AGENCIES, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, AND NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCIES.

WE NEED MUCH MORE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH TO UNDERSTAND THE FULL IMPACT OF MANY ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS AND STRESSES WITH REGARD TO THEIR SUB-CLINICAL LONG-TERM GENETIC AND EVOLUTIONARY EFFECTS. EVEN SO, WHILE WE DO NOT NECESSARILY UNDERSTAND ALL THE ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS OF VARIOUS POLLUTANTS, IT WOULD BE RIDICULOUS TO WAIT ANOTHER THIRTY YEARS FOR FURTHER EVIDENCE AS WE DID FOR TOBACCO. WE MUST SHARPEN AND UTILIZE THE TOOLS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EPIDEMIOLOGY TO BETTER IDENTIFY THE CURRENT AND FUTURE EFFECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS AND STRESSES INASMUCH AS WE STILL DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE EFFECTS ON DISEASE

DISABILITY, EFFICIENCY, MORALE, COMFORT, QUALITY OF LIFE, LIFE-SPAN, ABSENTEEISM, INSURANCE RATES, MEDICAID AND MEDICARE BUDGETS, AND OTHER HEALTH CARE COSTS. HOWEVER, MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE AGREE THAT FURTHER ENHANCEMENT OF HEALTH STATUS WILL BE DUE TO IMPROVEMENTS IN DISEASE PREVENTION, HEALTH PROMOTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH.

WE NEED TO KNOW MUCH MORE ABOUT THE SPECIFIC TYPES OF PERSONNEL NEEDED. TO THIS END, INDIVIDUAL POSITIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE LEVEL THROUGH THE MANAGEMENT LEVEL, SUPERVISORY LEVEL AND TECHNICAL LEVEL, AS WELL AS THOSE POSITIONS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH AND EDUCATION, MUST BE BETTER STUDIED SO THAT WE CAN INSURE THE PROPER TYPE OF EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EXPERIENCE FOR SPECIFIC POSITIONS. AT THIS TIME, I AM CONVINCED THAT MANY INDIVIDUALS IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ARE USING NO MORE THAN 5% OF THEIR CAPABILITIES IN TERMS OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND. IN OTHER WORDS, WE ARE GROSSLY MIS-USING PERSONNEL, AND SUCH PERSONNEL ARE FREQUENTLY HIGHLY EDUCATED DOCTORAL LEVEL INDIVIDUALS.

REGISTRATION ACTS STILL POSE A DILEMMA AND ARE STILL BEING PURSUED BY INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL GROUPS WHO ARE FREQUENTLY MORE INTERESTED IN PROTECTING THEIR TURF THAN IN SERVING THE PUBLIC. REGISTRATION ACTS MAY BE A DIS-SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC BY LEGALLY LIMITING THE FIELD OF PRACTICE TO GROUPS NOT EDUCATIONALLY ATTUNED TO THE TASKS AT HAND IN THE FIRST PLACE.

DESPITE THE SCORES OF PROFESSIONALS NEEDED TO INSURE EFFECTIVENESS IN THE PROGRAMMATIC RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, TWO BASIC HEALTH SCIENCES ARE ESSENTIAL TO ALL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS UNLESS

THEY ARE TO BE STRICTLY TECHNICIANS. EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIOSTATISTICS ARE, IN MY MIND, THESE TWO SCIENCES. ANY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM THAT PURPORTS TO TRAIN GRADUATE LEVEL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL MUST INSURE A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIOSTATISTICS IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER NEEDS.

I BELIEVE IT IS UNREALISTIC TO ASSUME THAT ALL GRADUATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL WILL BE DERIVED FROM FORMAL GRADUATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS, BUT MUST ALSO CONTINUE TO BE RECRUITED WITH EDUCATION IN THE VARIOUS BASIC SCIENCES SUCH AS CHEMISTRY, BIOLOGY, GEOLOGY, PHYSICS, AND FROM ENGINEERING. WE SHOULD DO A MUCH BETTER JOB OF ADD-ON TRAINING FOR SUCH INDIVIDUALS IN THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AS WELL AS IN BIOSTATISTICS AND EPIDEMIOLOGY.

THERE IS ALSO A SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF ADEQUATE GRADUATE LEVEL TRAINING TO RE-TREAD THOSE OF US WHOSE FORMAL EDUCATION ENDED TEN, TWENTY, OR THIRTY YEARS AGO AND ARE NO LONGER TECHNICALLY CURRENT.

FEW GRADUATE PROGRAMS APPROPRIATELY EDUCATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL IN THE BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES; THE ISSUES WHICH UNDERLINE AND CREATE OUR POLLUTION AND HEALTH PROBLEMS; THE PRIORITY ISSUES WHICH MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AND MANAGED IF WE ARE EVER TO REALIZE OUR GOAL OF "AN ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL CONFER OPTIMAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ON THIS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS." THE ISSUES I REFER TO ARE OVER-POPULATION, RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES, AND LAND-USE. AND EVEN THESE WILL NOT BE SOLVED WITHOUT AMELIORATING PROBLEMS OF IGNORANCE AND POVERTY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THERE CONTINUES TO BE A GAP BETWEEN TOWN AND GOWN. WHILE SOME ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND OPERATING PROGRAMS HAVE EXCELLENT, CONTINUING COMMUNICATION, MANY STILL OPERATE IN COMPARATIVE VACUUMS. THE BEST INTERESTS OF BOTH TOWN AND GOWN AS WELL AS THE ENTIRE PUBLIC ARE SERVED WHEN TOWN AND GOWN WORK TOGETHER THROUGH ORGANIZED MECHANISMS INSTEAD OF LEAVING SUCH COMMUNICATION TO CHANCE AND PERSONALITIES.

THERE HAS BEEN A DISCERNABLE ENLARGEMENT OF EMPHASIS ON MANY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO PROPERLY INCLUDE THE CURRENTLY IMPORTANT ISSUES OF TOXIC CHEMICALS, HAZARDOUS WASTES, AND IONIZING RADIATION. THOSE FEW STILL OPERATING PRIMARILY IN THE MICROBIOLOGICAL ERA ARE PRODUCING NARROWLY ORIENTED SANITATION PERSONNEL WHO WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY PRODUCING AND COMPETING. THESE INSTITUTIONS ARE OUT OF STEP AS SERIOUSLY AS THE ENGINEERING SCHOOLS WHICH EMPHASIZE ONLY WATER AND WASTE-WATER WHILE PURPORTING TO EDUCATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ENGINEERS.

AS FOR SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRIORITIES, I WOULD INCLUDE THOSE WHICH 1) ARE IRREVERSIBLE IN NATURE AND WILL DAMAGE THE ENVIRONMENT AND/OR HUMAN HEALTH OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME; AND THOSE 2) HAVING ACUTE AND/OR CHRONIC HEALTH EFFECTS. UNDER THESE GENERAL GUIDELINES I WOULD LIST AIR POLLUTION, WATER POLLUTION, HAZARDOUS WASTES, THE NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE, ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMICALS, ACCIDENTS, AND SAFE DRINKING WATER.

I BECAME INTERESTED IN ISSUES OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSON-POWER WITHIN THE FIRST FEW WEEKS AFTER I ENTERED THE FIELD OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN 1950. AT THAT TIME, I KNEW NOTHING OF THE LORE AND TRADITION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ITS VARIOUS FIEFDOMS SO I WAS

PROBABLY MUCH MORE OBJECTIVE THEN THAN I AM NOW. AT ANY RATE, I WAS ASTOUNDED TO LEARN AT THAT EARLY STAGE IN MY CAREER THAT ONE WITH MY BACKGROUND IN SCIENCE COULD NOT ASPIRE TO HOLD THE TOP LEVEL JOB IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OR THE TOP JOB IN PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE DEPARTMENT IN WHICH I WAS EMPLOYED. BY TRADITION AND TEXTBOOKS, ONLY A SANITARY ENGINEER COULD HOLD THE TOP JOB IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, AND ONLY A PHYSICIAN COULD FILL THE TOP JOB IN PUBLIC HEALTH.

THREE YEARS LATER I WAS PRIVILEGED TO BE SELECTED TO ATTEND A SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO ABSORB THE MYSTIQUE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND EARN ANOTHER MASTER'S DEGREE. THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH BULLETIN DESCRIBED SEVERAL DIFFERENT PROGRAMS, AND I STILL REMEMBER THE DESCRIPTION OF TWO OF THEM. FOR A PERSON WITH A BACKGROUND IN BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES AND CHEMISTRY, THE MPH GRADUATE WOULD BE QUALIFIED TO BE THE CHIEF OF A SECTION OR BUREAU WITHIN A DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH. A PERSON WITH A BACKGROUND IN ENGINEERING WOULD BE QUALIFIED TO BE A DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH. AND A FURTHER ODDITY WAS THAT BOTH OF THESE GROUPS OF PERSONNEL TOOK IDENTICAL COURSES AT THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

WELL, THERE HAS BEEN LOTS OF WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE SINCE THAT TIME, AND ONE-BY-ONE MANY OF THESE ARCHAIC TRADITIONS HAVE ENDED AND THE ILLOGICAL FIEFDOMS SHATTERED.

IRONICALLY, IN ONE STATE, REGISTERED SANITARIANS NOW HAVE THE SAME TYPE OF CONTROL, AND HAVE WRITTEN THE REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTERED SANITARIANS INTO MANY OF THE MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH STATUTES AND ORDINANCES, SO THAT THIS GROUP OF PERSONNEL NOT ONLY CONTROLS ALL THE PROGRAMS, BUT REQUIRES AN ENGINEER TO BE A REGISTERED SANITARIAN TO EFFECTIVELY PRACTICE IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH. NOT ONLY IS SUCH A PRACTICE ABSURD, BUT IT TENDS TO

NARROW THE SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WITHIN HEALTH AGENCIES AND CREATE FRAGMENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS TO A NUMBER OF OTHER AGENCIES, SPECIAL DISTRICTS, AND DEPARTMENTS, RESULTING IN OVERLAPPING, DUPLICATION, CONFUSION, AND GENERALLY DISENFRANCHISING THE PUBLIC OF ITS RIGHT TO COMPREHENSIVE, COORDINATED, EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS.

I WISH TO QUOTE FROM A 1974 LETTER I WROTE BILL HICKEY WHEN HE CHAIRED THE APHA SECTION ON ENVIRONMENT:

"DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES DURING THIS 'DECADE OF THE ENVIRONMENT', THE APHA SECTION ON ENVIRONMENT HAS BEEN NOTICEABLY LACKING IN POSITIVE POLICY STATEMENTS REGARDING MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES SUCH AS ENERGY, POPULATION, TRANSPORTATION, LAND-USE, ETC. WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR SOMEBODY TO DO SOMETHING FOR US. REGRETTABLY, WE APHA'ERS HAVE REALLY ABDICATED OUR TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN READY AND EAGER TO TAKE UP THE REINS OF LEADERSHIP. PERHAPS I CAN ILLUSTRATE THIS POINT BEST BY RECALLING AN AMUSING INCIDENT THAT I OBSERVED AT ONE OF THE APHA SESSIONS LAST FALL. THE MORNING HAD BEEN FILLED WITH LEARNED DISCUSSIONS INVOLVING ISSUES OF LAND-USE, POLLUTION, ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, POPULATION, AND CONSUMPTION OF RESOURCES. AT THE END OF THE SESSION CAME THE TIME FOR AUDIENCE QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS. AFTER A LENGTHY SILENCE, A YOUNG MAN ASKED IF MAYONNAISE SHOULD BE REFRIGERATED AFTER IT WAS OPENED."

ENOUGH SAID!

THE CAREER HEIGHTS TO WHICH PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL MAY ASPIRE ARE NOW AS GREAT AS THE INDIVIDUAL'S CAPABILITIES AND DESIRES. WHILE IT WAS ONCE ASSUMED THERE WAS A CAREER CEILING

OVER PROFESSIONALS IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, TIME AND EXPERIENCE HAVE PROVEN THAT INDIVIDUAL CAPABILITIES EQUAL THOSE IN OTHER PROFESSIONS. THERE IS A SOLID RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT IN GOVERNMENT, ACADEMIA, INDUSTRY, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE. THERE ARE DIRECTORS OF HEALTH, DIRECTORS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AGENCIES, PROFESSORS, DEANS, INDUSTRY AND ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES, DIRECTORS OF HEALTH SYSTEMS AGENCIES, AND VARIOUS OTHER MANAGERIAL AND EXECUTIVE CAPACITIES LISTED WITHIN THE RANKS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IS AN IMPORTANT GOAL IN OUR SOCIETY AND PROTECTING HUMAN HEALTH IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THAT GOAL. CAPABLE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL ARE NECESSARY IN ACHIEVING THAT GOAL, AND AS A PROFESSION, WE NEED NOT TAKE A BACK SEAT TO ANY OTHER GROUP. ANY QUESTION OF CAPABILITIES COMES FROM NEGATIVE ATTITUDES RATHER THAN FROM THE LACK OF EXPERTISE OR THE NEED FOR SAME. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL SHOULD REALIZE THEIR VALUE AND CONTINUE TO ASPIRE AND ACHIEVE, AND BE PROUD OF THEIR PART IN PROVIDING A QUALITY ENVIRONMENT.

APPROPRIATELY TRAINED PERSONNEL WILL NOT INSURE RESOLUTION OF ALL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, BUT RESOLUTION WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THEM.