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SHEA Newsletter

THE SOCIETY FOR HOSPITAL EPIDEMIOLOGY OF AMERICA

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Healthy People 2000

The Society was represented by Dr. C. Glen Mayhall, SHEA president, at the recent Healthy People 2000 conference in Washington, D.C. The conference was held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel on September 6-7, 1990, to launch the Healthy People 2000 national health promotion and disease prevention objectives.

Work on preparation of these health objectives for the year 2000 began in 1987. The development of these goals was facilitated by The Institute of Medicine of The National Academy of Sciences and the U.S. public health service. The health objectives were prepared by a consortium of almost 300 national membership organizations and by all of the state health departments. Eight regional hearings were convened, where testimony was received from 750 individuals and organizations. The objectives underwent extensive public review and comment involving more than 10,000 people.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, secretary of Health and Human Service. Other speakers during the general session on the first day were Dr. Reed Tuckson, senior vice-president for programs of the March of Dimes; William R. Howell, chair of the board and chief executive officer of the J.C. Penney Company, Inc.; and Arthur S. Flemming, former secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The health objectives in their final version are of limited interest to the membership of SHEA. The first objective of interest appears in the section on occupational safety and health: "10.5. Reduce hepatitis B infections among occupationally exposed workers to an incidence of no more than 1,250 cases." (The baseline was an estimated 6,200 cases in 1987.) The second objective of interest appears in the section on human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection: "18.14. Extend to all facilities where workers are at risk for occupational transmission of HIV, regulations to protect workers from exposure to bloodborne infections, including HIV infection." (Baseline data to be available in 1992.) Note: the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was expected to issue regulations requiring worker protection from exposure to bloodborne infections, including HIV, in 1990. Implementation of the OSHA regulations would satisfy this objective. The third objective of interest appears in the section on immunization and infectious diseases: "20.5. Reduce by at least 10% the incidence of surgical wound infections and nosocomial infections in intensive care patients." (Baseline data available in late 1990.)

The latter objective would appear to be the only one of continuing importance to the members of SHEA, since immunization against hepatitis B for healthcare workers and protection of healthcare workers from blood and body fluids will be accomplished by mandate from OSHA. Our society needs to develop a long-range strategy to achieve this objective by the year 2000.

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