



NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

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HEW Secretary Elliot L. Richardson today announced a nation-wide program of professional and public information on high blood pressure, the most common of the heart and blood vessel diseases.

He appointed two committees, which met at the National Institutes of Health on Monday, July 24, and at HEW the following morning, to help plan this effort.

One of the two committees, a Hypertension Information and Education Advisory Committee, is composed of 12 members, chosen for their specialized knowledge of hypertension or communications.

The second committee is an Interagency Working Group, composed of representatives of Federal agencies, who will promote exchange of scientific information and provide program coordination in the professional community.

At its meeting, the Advisory Committee recommended a four-step plan for launching a National Hypertension Program: (1) agreement on the standards and conditions for treatment; (2) education of professional health workers; (3) a widespread program of public information on hypertension; and (4) a study of the impact of an expanded hypertension program on the health care delivery system, and an assessment of the need for additional resources.

In announcing the plan, Secretary Richardson noted that hypertension may cause the deaths of as many as 60,000 Americans each year, and that it plays a major role in deaths from stroke and in heart attacks.

"I am convinced," he said, "that we can prevent many of these deaths if we mount a program to inform both the profession and the general public about the benefits of early detection and management. We need to put our scientific knowledge into practice as quickly and efficiently as possible."

(more)

The director of the National Heart and Lung Institute, Dr. Theodore Cooper, pointed out that research over the past two decades has provided new and effective drugs for the treatment of hypertension. However, he noted that only about 20 percent of hypertensives are on adequate therapy.

He added that inroads against hypertension and related heart disease and stroke will be made by the education program recommended by the Advisory Committee. He also said that research should continue, to find the causes and mechanisms of hypertension.

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