



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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DOLE CALLS FOR ADMINISTRATION ACTION ON PHYSICIAN PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Senator Bob Dole today called upon Administration officials for action in the Physician Shortage Area Scholarship Program, which Dole cosponsored.

Dole explained that although \$4 million in funds have been appropriated for such a program during Fiscal Years 1973 and 1974, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare has never budgeted any money to implement the law and there have never been any regulations drafted for it.

The Scholarship Program, which became law in 1971, authorizes the Secretary of HEW to make yearly scholarship grants of up to \$5,000 directly to medical students who agree to engage, after completion of their professional training, in the practice of primary health care in physician shortage areas or to engage in the practice of primary health care in which a substantial portion of the patients receiving such care will consist of migratory agricultural workers or members of their families.

In discussion on the Senate floor, Dole said that the failure to implement the program has "had far reaching adverse effects in Kansas -- where the shortage of physicians is particularly acute.

"In spite of the positive outlook when the program became law, the status of the critical physician distribution problem has remained relatively unchanged. In Kansas, there are still many locations where one doctor must serve almost an entire county. Residents in some rural areas may have to drive as many as 50 miles to receive even emergency medical care.

"This is an unacceptable situation in a nation with the wealth of professional resources which we have. The Shortage Area Scholarship Program was designed to provide incentives to help overcome this pressing need, and it is indeed unfortunate that those charged with carrying it out have not seen fit to do so. The funds have been appropriated and willing applicants are waiting. We have clearly demonstrated and reaffirmed our intentions. Now, it is incumbent upon the administering officials to act."