

Medical Monitoring Office Chief Quits, Charging Lack of Support

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 14 — The head of a new Federal program intended to monitor the quality of services provided by doctors and hospitals resigned today and charged that the Administration had not provided him with resources and support.

Dr. William I. Bauer, director of the Office of Professional Standards Review in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, said he could not continue in the position that he has held for six months because of "limited resources" and "the organizational structure."

Dr. Bauer directed a program enacted a year ago named Professional Standards Review Organizations whose aims are to set up federally and state-directed groups in each state to oversee the quality of health care dispensed to people enrolled in Medicare, Medicaid and other Federal Health programs.

P.S.R.O., as it is usually called, would make spot checks at the local level to determine if proper medical services had been given at fair cost. As originally conceived, the program would have had hundreds of inspectors checking patient records and hospital bills.

In a letter to Dr. Charles C. Edwards Jr., Assistant Secretary of H.E.W. for health, Dr. Bauer said "the Administration has made a significant commitment to the P.S.R.O. program, but that commitment has not been translated into action by health" meaning the health side of the department.

Problems Are Cited

"This extremely complex program with ramifications at all levels of medical care has been provided with limited resources, and those resources that were made available could not be effectively administered and utilized because of the organizational structure," the letter added.

An associate of Dr. Bauer said, "We just don't have enough people to get off the ground." The aide said 36 physicians were supposed to work under Dr. Bauer but added that "we don't have 36 people, file clerks and all."

Dr. Bauer was also known to have felt that his lines of authority had become tangled in a bureaucratic maze with responsibility for P.S.R.O. operations in one office and P.S.R.O. policy in another.

Funds for P.S.R.O. activities were provided by the Social Security Administration, the Social and Rehabilitation Service and the Health Services Administration, although Dr.

Bauer worked out of Dr. Edwards' office in the H.E.W. department.

Observers viewed the resignation as evidence of the continuing unease within the department over attempts to restructure its health organizations. Throughout the year a variety of bureaus, services, administrations and services have been realigned but the reorganization still has not placed all of the department's health groups under one official in one office.

Third Resignation

Dr. Bauer's departure was H.E.W. health official in four months. Others who have left are Dr. Arthur J. Lesser, director of the Maternal and Child Health Service, and Dr. Gordon McLeod, director of the Health Maintenance Organization Service.

At the time of his resignation, Dr. McLeod said he felt that the health maintenance organization group was being downgraded in the department. The H.M.O. and P.S.R.O. concepts have been two of the major health initiatives of the Nixon Administration.

Following the resignation, Caspar W. Weinberger, H.E.W. Secretary, issued a statement naming Dr. Henry Simmons, Dr. Edwards's assistant, as a temporary replacement for Dr. Bauer "so that there will be no loss of momentum in this vital program."

Dr. Bauer, who is 48, was named to direct the new program in March after spending 17 years as a practicing physician. He is from Greeley, Colo.

The P.S.R.O. office currently has a budget of \$1.5-million, although \$32-million is to be transferred to it from other agencies in H.E.W. The program was to be operational throughout the country by 1976.

Rob McGarrah, a member of the consumer-oriented Health Research Group here who is familiar with P.S.R.O. activities, noted after the resignation was announced that the organization "is not only leaderless but the American Medical Association, whose members would be monitored by P.S.R.O.'s, now has more people working in the P.S.R.O. field than the Federal Government does."