

Medical School Expansion

OHIO ADMITTEDLY lacks facilities to train enough medical doctors to meet the state's own needs, and it will continue to lag behind if it accepts without question the limited plan offered last week by Dr. Charles Doan, dean of Ohio State University's medical school.

Contending that it would be cheaper and faster to expand OSU's medical school than to build a new one elsewhere in the state, he advised the Governor's Interim Commission on Higher Education to accept a program that would go only one-third of the way toward meeting Ohio's currently estimated deficit in medical school graduates. And that plan completely overlooks the fact that northwestern Ohio is the only one of the state's four major population centers without a medical training and research center.

The proposed expansion of OSU's medical school would provide 50 more doctors a year. But the commission reports that professional studies indicate a need for more than 150 additional medical graduates each year.

Even then, Dr. Doan concedes that University Hospital in Columbus would have to be expanded by as many as 300 extra beds to facilitate a limited expansion at OSU, plus classrooms and laboratories, at an estimated cost of \$15 million, not counting the cost of additional faculty salaries and extra equipment.

Fortunately, the commission also is considering the possibility of building one or more new medical schools in Toledo, Dayton, Akron, or Youngstown—where municipal universities might be expanded through state aid to include medical schools.

And as the commission considers all of these possibilities, it would be wise to keep in mind that a medical school has two key functions. One, obviously, is to train future doctors. But equally important is a school's second function of increasing the attention given to research and the latest developments in medical practice. This function has a reciprocal effect upon the treatment and specialized services available in the surrounding area.

It should be apparent that this second function would not apply to new medical school facilities in Columbus, already served by OSU's existing school and hospital. The other existing schools and teaching hospitals in Cleveland and Cincinnati reportedly are in no position to expand.

That leaves Toledo and the other major cities that have no medical schools as the logical places for new training facilities. And, as Frank W. King of Toledo, State Senate majority leader and a member of the commission, reminded other members of the state study group, Toledo already has a university and large hospital facilities that eminently qualify it for consideration.

On the basis of testimony given thus far, it is apparent that the cost factor will be stressed, just as Dr. Doan argued that it would be cheaper and faster to expand at OSU. But the cost argument is irrelevant when it overlooks the need for new medical training facilities to service an area not already so served and proposes instead merely to duplicate services already in existence.

And a proposal that would limit expansion to OSU at Columbus becomes even more questionable when it also draws the line on meeting two-thirds of Ohio's requirements for more doctors in the future.