Nationwide Record of Heart Progress

EXTENSION OF REMARKS
OF
HON. JOHN E. FOGARTY
OF RHODE ISLAND
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, March 14, 1962

Mr. FOGARTY. Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks, I include an address which I delivered to the Heart Association of Maryland at the Emerson Hotel, Baltimore, Md., on January 31, 1962:
REMARKS OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS, AT THE NATIONAL MEETING OF HEART ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND AT EMERSON HOTEL, BALTIMORE, MD., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 1963

It is easy, as you have already heard the beginning heart fund drive, because you are embarking upon work that will mean the saving of lives from heart disease. It is also a privilege to share with you about this teamwork for health, with you about this work that will mean the advancement of the fight against heart disease.

In my home State of Rhode Island, I have long been a member of our heart association. I have followed the course and teachings of the heart association itself is essential to the effort to advance the fight against heart disease. The heart association can adapt quickly to the changing needs and dimensions of the problem. It is a cooperative effort by agencies, research institutions, and other interested interests can conquer heart disease.

That we can move ahead with the confidence of the heart association in our country is more than a vague hope. It is a strong probability. This is the opinion of authorizers, whose endeavors until they represent the utmost in an all-out attack. This we have not yet done. Among many others, however, I am confident that we can do it.

Why do those of us who have closely engaged the enemy of disease for years feel that we are not yet ready? It is because of the successes of recent years. Progress has been made on many fronts. Skirmishes and battles have been fought against heart disease and more and more are being won year by year.

Let us glance at these victories and see some of the fruits of the cooperative efforts against heart disease in which the heart association has played a vital role. Against the greatest of all heart killers: hardening of the arteries, which leads to coronary attacks and strokes, the research, the education, and the management of coronary disease is now resulting in the restoration of many thousands of lives. Early detection and prompt medical and social emergency. Surgery now can help relieve some kinds of coronary and arteriosclerotic heart disease; clot-blocked arteries can be cleared or replaced, for instance, and even a sizable number of victims of deadly strokes can be saved by dramatic new operations.

Drugs to strengthen the heart and prevent further blood clotting are helping many heart victims and are getting better all the time. Hypertension—or high blood pressure—is one of the major problems in the complex of diseases of the heart and blood vessels. The heart association has been at work against this form of heart disease. There was very little that could be done a few years ago to help the majority of high blood pressure sufferers. Although there is as yet no specific preventive or cure, progress in treatment to date has been heartening. Surgeons have been used with beneficial effects in certain patients. But, the most striking advances have been made in the development of drugs of varying types and potencies are available. While none is ideal, these drugs, singly and in combination, can lessen the severity of hypertension in many patients and control it to some degree in others.

Rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart diseases are another component of the heart disease complex against which practical advances have been made. The programs of the Heart Association have resulted in the discovery of therapeutic agents, such as the antibiotics, to prevent the recurrent attacks of rheumatic fever which may eventually result in Medicare heart disease. They can prevent initial attacks by prompt, adequate treatment of the strep infections which precede heart disease. Even when rheumatic heart disease does result, modern surgery can often alleviate or correct the heart valve disorder.

In congenital heart disease, great strides have also been made, as you well know in Maryland and across the country. Patients. But, the most striking advances in treatment to date has been heartening. The heart association itself is essential to the effort to advance the fight against heart disease. The heart association can adapt quickly to the changing needs and dimensions of the problem. It is a cooperative effort by agencies, research institutions, and other interested interests can conquer heart disease.

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The pact of heart disease is a challenge to every man, woman, and child. It forms a constant threat of death, disability, heavy economic loss, or disruption and ruin to families, homes, and careers.

The No. 1 killer, heart disease causes well over half of all deaths in the United States each year.

The total number of heart deaths is still increasing. In 1940, there were 535,000 deaths from heart disease. In 1950, there were 745,000 deaths. In 1961, there were over 900,000 heart deaths.

At least 10,100,000 persons are afflicted with heart disease, according to the National Health Survey of the Government. Over half of these persons are in the age group 25-64.

The economic costs of heart disease are vast. In 1960, compensation and pension payments to veterans disabled by heart disease amounted to $464,000. The cost of lost productivity in 1958 of persons in the labor force disabled by heart disease has been estimated at $1,210 million.

The costs and toll of heart disease will increase further unless we make greater progress toward its conquest. Are there real opportunities to achieve such progress? I hold that the answer is a resounding “yes.”

This is true in research. We have won no really major victory, for example, against hardening of the arteries or high blood pressure. We have won skirmishes and battles. We have not yet won the war. Thousands have been helped, but hundreds of thousands have not, and cannot be on the basis of today’s knowledge. Many scientists feel, however, that there are so many research areas of opportunity today in hardening of the arteries that, given adequate manpower, facilities, and funds, the answer needed for victory can be uncovered.

In the field of education, both for the public and for research scientists, physicians, and health workers, much remains to be done. The area of training shows needs, for example, to increase research manpower and that of the health professions. Ways and means also need to be developed to improve the transmission of knowledge among scientists and to those who apply useful knowledge as it comes from research. Much more can be done in public education, too. The heart story has not yet been fully told to everyone.

The area of community services also provides challenging opportunities. Far more can be done in this field. Here alone lies more than sufficient evidence of the need for heart funds and new and increased activities. Services to patients in cooperation with their physicians, as in the provision of home care and home nursing programs, are an opportunity of great challenge and need.

As you take stock of the size and nature of the enemy, heart disease, then, and the needs and opportunities for progress against it, you will find solid ground for the conviction that you are embarking upon a most important endeavor for a truly worthwhile cause.

In closing, let me wish you every success and say again that I view the future as one bright with promise for progress. I could not hold this view without an equally strong feeling that the combined forces of the heart association, the medical and health professions, research institutions, and the official agencies will continue and grow as the essential partnership which will win victory over heart disease.