

~~SECRET~~
Negro Physicians

~~VIRGINIA M. ALEXANDER, M. D.~~
 2104
 243-JEFFERSON STREET
 PHILADELPHIA, PA.

OFFICE HOURS
 BY APPOINTMENT

September 16, 1935.

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Dr. Edwin R. Embree
 The Julius Rosenwald Fund
 4901 Ellis Avenue
 Chicago, Illinois

My dear Mr. Embree:

I am writing to ask for a grant from the Julius Rosenwald Fund for help in preparing myself for public health service. The grounds for my request are as follows:

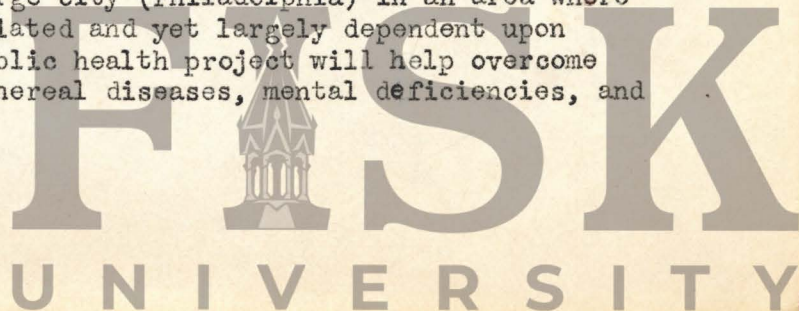
I have had eight years of general practice of medicine with some limited hospital connections. I am at present well established as a physician with an office practice mainly by appointment and I conduct a three-bed, licensed, lying-in-hospital which I call the Aspiranto Health Home. I use these beds for convalescent and not-too-sick patients, for tonsillectomies and normal obstetrical cases. My Health Home is a teaching center where my patients learn principles of health and how to carry on when they return to their own households.

On the whole, my work seems to me to be good; many of my friends are enthusiastic about it, and I am sure that I am appreciated. However, during these years of practice, I have been increasingly aware of the need of the people of my community for public health facilities and teaching. There is a lamentable lack of understanding and consideration by hospital authorities and subordinates toward the needs of Negro patients, the ability of Negro physicians and the relation of these physicians to the health of the city.

I believe that the time has come for a forward public health movement for the benefit of Philadelphia Negroes and that I should drop my general practice for a time in order to take up disciplined study and research with the view of getting into form my convictions, theory, and larger dream for fuller service in the field of public health and adult education. I propose, therefore, to conclude some studying which I had begun under Dr. Bossard at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School (Sociology) in Child Welfare and Human Ecology and to begin work in January at Yale University School of Public Health and Institute of Human Relations. While at Yale, I want to do some work under the guidance of Dr. Lindeman of the New York School of Social Service in Adult Education; and in the summer of 1936, I want to study the Public Health system of Norway, Sweden and Germany.

My research problem will be to prepare a public health program on an inter-racial basis for a poor community in a large city (Philadelphia) in an area where the people are nearly all colored and isolated and yet largely dependent upon private or public philanthropy. A new public health project will help overcome the ignorance and reticence concerning venereal diseases, mental deficiencies, and

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will give sex education, parent guidance, mental hygiene, vocational guidance and adult education to leaders of communities and to the under-privileged as well. My plan would be to develop the principle of discussion and group conference with the view to making available to young practicing physicians, and allied groups (nurses, social workers, technicians, etc.) material and knowledge otherwise missed by them, and stimulating thinking and participation by them in the public health program. While I am in sympathy with some form of socialized medicine for this country as a whole, I feel that without more study and thought on the subject by numbers of physicians, no plan can go forward. I want therefore, to give time and attention to the subject of Socialized Medicine; to do creative writing, and engage in public speaking in order to influence and stimulate my group for advanced thinking in these three fields of social change: (Public Health, Adult Education and Socialized Medicine.)

I am a member of the Society of Friends and have talked with several groups of these and have been urged to go on with my thinking and planning. I have talked also with the executive committee of the staff of our Woman's College Hospital and too with the director of the Lankenau Hospital. From all these came definite encouragement. I called on Mr. Sydenstricker of the Milbank Memorial Fund and have been encouraged to present my project for an Interracial Public Health Program to him this fall. In order to follow this up, I secured the cooperation of Dr. George Simpson of the Department of Sociology of Temple University and students at the Institute of Race Relations at Swarthmore this summer which was conducted by the American Friends Service Committee. A small fund was furnished by a Friend and this helped us to make a health survey of some 500 families during the past summer. This study and an earlier one by Dr. Simpson and myself covering hospitals in Philadelphia will be presented to the Milbank Memorial Fund in October as the basis of my request for establishing a Public Health Project in North Philadelphia.

In my original verbal statement to Mr. Sydenstricker, I stated that I knew there were available men and women in the field of medicine, nursing and social service prepared to carry on this program. As my plan develops, however, in my own mind, and as I talk with those in position to advise me, I am less sure that there is ready at present a person thoroughly enough trained in public health to direct this work and it is for this reason that I want to prepare myself so that I can be able to take up the work after it is established by the Milbank Fund or by any other agency, for such a project must get under way in Philadelphia in the near future.

In 1931, I requested of the National Research Council a fellowship for the study of Cardiology. While the request was not granted it was received with sympathy and was referred to the General Education Board.* In 1934, I prepared a request for a Rosenwald Fellowship. I did not send the request to you because I did not feel easy to leave my own practice at that time; and because that plan for study was not so clearly vital as the present project seems.

* I did not hear from the board nor did I follow up my request further.



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I plan to leave my present work in the hands of a young woman physician to carry on, aided, as I have been aided, by two of our best trained young men physicians, and supervised somewhat by myself. I expect thus to be free for study from the minute a grant may be given me. I feel that I cannot do this and build up data and information, in order to do creative writing and research in the field of Public Health and Adult Education, without a grant for at least two years of \$3,000 a year.

I refer by permission to the enclosed list of persons who can testify as to my work, ability and character.

I am, sir,

Very respectfully yours,

Virginia M. Alexander, M.D.

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VA:EC

Enclosures:

- (1) First page of application blank received and made out in February, 1934. The other pages were not relevant to the present request.
- (2) List of persons who can testify as to my work, ability and character.
- (3) Story of my work--from *The Crisis*, *February* 1933.
- (4) Certificate of Health.
- (5) Copies of letters from Dr. Huber, Dr. Fetterman and Dr. Doane.

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