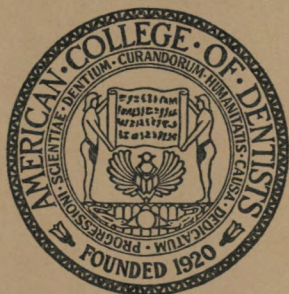


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Continuing Education: A Challenge To the Profession

WILLIAM R. PATTERSON, D.D.S.

Dr. Patterson is a graduate of Washington University School of Dentistry, 1950. He is a general practitioner. The Commission on the Survey of Dentistry requested that he prepare this paper as one of the studies pertinent to the Survey. He has written considerable concerning general problems of dental education and continuation studies.

He is chairman of the Board of the Institute for Postgraduate Education in Dentistry, University of Arkansas; chairman of the Science Committee and member of the Board of Regents, Texarkana College; chairman of the Executive Committee, Buchanan Foundation, School of Nursing; and a member of the Executive Council, Arkansas State Dental Association.

The rapidly flowing, changing events which mark the progress of dental art and science give new dimension and place greater demand on the educational system of the profession.

The ever-widening gap between research and clinical practice makes it apparent that improved methods of continuing education must be developed. The term "continuing education" as used here encompasses all forms of dental education following completion of the undergraduate curriculum. The present scope of these activities, including graduate, postgraduate, and refresher type programs now being offered, cannot be assumed to serve the needs of 90,000 dental practitioners. There is little comfort in the fact that medicine faces the same important problem.¹⁻⁶ The dentist or physician who is conducting a 1940 type practice in 1960 is rendering limited service to the patient and constitutes a liability to his profession. In the final analysis, the public's collective appraisal of the healing arts is not on the basis of official pronouncements made by the professions, but

Special Studies, Number 25, Commission on the Survey of Dentistry in the United States of the American Council on Education.