To the Editor:

To Franz Goldmann

The death of Franz Goldmann at the age of 74 on March 4, 1970, brings to an end a distinguished and dedicated career in public health which began in the early 1920s in Berlin, Germany, and continued from 1937 to 1947 at the Yale Department of Public Health, and from 1947 to 1958 at the Harvard School of Public Health. Following his retirement from Harvard in 1958, Dr. Goldmann continued to be active as a consultant, seminar leader, and lecturer until a few months before his death.

A contact with Franz Goldmann, whether in a lecture, an informal seminar, or a personal conversation, was indeed a rare experience. One immediately became impressed with the clarity of his thinking, his understanding of social forces, and his determined efforts to share his knowledge so that his students, colleagues, and friends would gain understanding of the evolutionary course that he envisioned for the continuing organization of medical services in the United States. As a teacher he was constantly thinking, and wishing to act, not in the moment at hand, but at the moment ahead—when we, his students and younger colleagues, would be the planners, leaders, and doers. This power to project himself beyond the confines of the here and now—and into the future—was one of his great attributes.

His two books, Voluntary Medical Care Insurance in the United States (1948) and Public Medical Care (1945), and more than one hundred articles, classics in the field of medical care, presented in a variety of ways his deep-seated conviction that the health of every individual must be a matter of major social concern and responsibility. He maintained that one of the obligations implied in a democratic society was the provision of the highest calibre medical care for all groups of the population without discrimination as to race, color or economic status.

Franz Goldmann was always a bit impatient with himself. His understanding of the role of social and political forces in the organization of medical care made it easy for him to envision mistakes in planning which others were unable to comprehend. He felt it his personal responsibility to guide America in the right direction and to try to avoid the errors that appeared so obvious to him.

Franz Goldmann’s faith and hope in his students is characteristically inscribed on the fly leaf of a copy of Voluntary Medical Care Insurance in the United States, which he presented in 1948 to the late Richard Weinerman (at that time, a student at the Harvard School of Public Health). It reads:

“To Dr. R. Weinerman: With best wishes for his future. . . . Bear in mind, your labor is for future hours. Advance! Spare not.”

Here in his bold handwriting, Franz Goldmann expresses confidence that his students would work to create the world he so fervently desired. The responsibility for fulfilling his hopes lies in our hands.

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To the Editor:

Educators and Health Education

Once again, I must express amazement at the planning of responsible groups exploring the necessary requisites for effective health education programs.

My reference is to the Report On Health Education—Its Relationship to Comprehensive Health Planning at State Level, by the Committee on Educational Tasks in Comprehensive Health Plan-