

Lecture December 18, 1988

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Address

By

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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This was a festive occasion held in the Starlight room of the Waldorf Astoria and although this audience had little interest in Christmas, the Christmas decorations at the Waldorf lent a gala atmosphere to the proceedings.

I thanked the trustees and the administrators, and the faculty of Yeshiva for inviting me for the Convocation and recognizing me with an award of an honorary degree. I reminded them that Albert Einstein was the first person to receive such a degree and one of my favorite quotations by Einstein is taken from his volume "On Science." He wrote, "Imagination is more important than knowledge". Inasmuch as I was given carte blanche to say anything I wished on this occasion, I said I would talk a little bit about imagination and look ahead to what might occur in medicine and in public health in the century ahead. That was just 11 years away at that time and it seemed appropriate to talk about a new century because Yeshiva was only 2 years into its own second century. I covered the areas of relationship between technology and health, that people themselves can and must take charge of their own health status, as well as a and the change in relationship between the public and the health care system itself.

For each of these I used illustrations and talked about everything from the "graying of America" to "baby boomers," from pediatrics to geriatric medicine and the many specialists and technicians in between. I mentioned the "self-help" movement and how great would be the marriage of traditional medicine and public health with the self-help movement which led to the related issue of community values and public support, relative to public health. And closed with the hope that the changes I foresaw would, on balance, contribute to a stronger, more contemporary, more responsive system of health care for the next and succeeding generations of Americans.