

Dir. to phys. requesting them

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



State Board of Health.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER 1, 1874.

DEAR SIR:—

The State Board of Health is very desirous of getting weekly information of the diseases prevalent in all parts of Massachusetts. The object is certainly one of great importance,—positive knowledge of the health of the people, as well as of the diseases which, at any time and place, are present, or which threaten to extend as epidemics.

In order, however, to attain this end, the Board will need the co-operation of a large and select number of physicians, in full general practice, in various parts of the State. We therefore take the liberty of asking whether you will consent to be one of this number,—to report weekly, during the next year (1875), the diseases prevalent in your vicinity. The enclosed sample postal card will indicate the proposed method; it will be observed that an endeavor has been made to reduce to the minimum the expenditure of time and trouble incident to the service asked of busy medical men.

The Board has appointed Dr. F. W. DRAPER, of Boston, to be the Registrar of this new Bureau of Health Correspondence. He will compile from the returns received a concise weekly bulletin of prevalent diseases, to be reported to the Secretary of the Board, and published, with appropriate comments, for the information of the people. At the end of the year, a summary of the accumulated observations will be prepared for publication in the Annual Report of the Board.

If the Board is successful in securing the co-operation of physicians in the accomplishment of this plan, the practical results will be of essential value, not only to the State at large but to private individuals. To medical men, in particular, such a weekly synopsis of prevalent diseases would be possessed of obvious interest. It is not out of place to remark also that the present scheme is the first

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practical attempt in any part of the world to make a systematic weekly Registration of Diseases. It is hoped that you will consent to assist the Board in executing a purpose which is capable of being developed to very useful ends; if you will please to signify your willingness to undertake the service alluded to, the proper blanks will be forwarded.

We have the honor to be very respectfully yours,

HENRY I. BOWDITCH,
DAVID L. WEBSTER,
J. C. HOADLEY,
RICHARD FROTHINGHAM,
T. B. NEWHALL,
R. T. DAVIS,
CHAS. F. FOLSOM,

Members of the State Board of Health.

