

MAY LACK MEDICAL AID

ARMED FORCES TO TAKE FROM
30,000 TO 60,000 DOCTORS.

Shortage of Physicians Expected
to Force Home Treatment of
Minor Ailments and Limit
Home Calls.

(By the Associated Press.)

ATLANTIC CITY, June 8.—The United States is now faced with perhaps its gravest rationing problem—the proper distribution of medical care.

Few people have yet considered this necessity caused by the calling of thousands of physicians into military service. But to physicians gathering here for the ninety-third annual meeting of the American Medical association it is one of the most acute situations in national defense.

The army medical corps has estimated that approximately six doctors are needed for every 1,000 men. These are only the physicians needed in administration and medical care of soldiers in camps and hospitals and does not include those required for field hospitals, base hospitals and front line duty.

ARMY NEEDS LARGE.

The number needed to take care of the army of 4½ million to 5 million expected to be in service by January 1, 1943, is a minimum of 30,000, a maximum of 60,000. In addition, Dr. Oren A. Oliver of Nashville, Tenn., president of the American Dental association, declared 11,200 dentists would be required to take care of the teeth of an army of 5 million and a navy of 1 million men. More than 5,000 have already been called into military service.

The drain on the nation's peacetime supply of doctors is going to be terrific, officials of the American Medical association declared, since there are now listed only about 181,530 qualified physicians throughout the United States, Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. Many of these have retired from practice, and approximately 3,700 die each year. In 1941 approximately 5,700 young physicians and refugee doctors from foreign countries were licensed to practice.

MORE NEW DOCTORS.

Association officials estimated that because of increases in medical college enrollment and the speeding up of courses the number of new physicians should increase by about 25 per cent during the next four years.

This, however, will not compensate for the number of doctors being called into army and navy service and as a result the American people will be on short medical rations. It will no longer be possible to call for a physician to treat every cut or bruise or pain. Only in a severe emergency will physicians be able to make house calls and perhaps the doctor's first question will be, "Are you able to walk?" because about 90 per cent of his practice, usually minor ailments, must be treated in his office. He cannot waste tires, gasoline and particularly time, running about the countryside.

Approximately 10,000 physicians, nurses, public health engineers and other specialists are expected to attend the annual convention during the coming week.