

REHABILITATION ENGINEERING

A PLAN FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS

II



Rehabilitation
Services
Administration

Veterans
Administration

"To improve the quality of life of the physically handicapped through a total approach to rehabilitation, combining medicine, engineering, and related sciences."

The above quotation, from "Rehabilitation Engineering a plan for continued progress" from the NAS, April 1971 in a very general way describes the mission of Rehabilitation Engineering. It has been estimated that approximately ten percent of the population suffers from physical disability and that half of these could benefit from technical devices and services if they were available. Rehabilitation engineering is specifically concerned with the development, provision and maintenance of these technical devices and services as part of the rehabilitation process.

In the rehabilitation team, the person responsible for the engineering aspects is the Rehabilitation Engineer. The Rehabilitation Engineer is a qualified engineer who through experience and training is competent to accept responsibility in patient care, in a manner similar to a prosthetist or orthotist. In addition to providing patient services he is concerned with research and the development of new devices and techniques to aid disabled persons, in the hospital, at home, at work or in the world at large.