

In addition to certain province-wide activities, the Health Branch through its Bureau of Local Health Services supervises local public health activities. The Province is divided into Health Units and Public Health Nursing Districts each consisting of several school districts. Ten of the 18 Health Units planned are in operation and provide a generalized health program. In more isolated areas, the Public Health Nursing Districts, staffed by public health nurses and sanitary inspectors, operate as forerunners to Health Units. Vancouver and Victoria have their own Health Departments; other centres have part-time medical officers. With these exceptions all field public health personnel are employed by the Provincial Department. Approximately 94 p.c. of the population of the Province is served by full-time trained public health personnel.

General public health services are operative throughout the Health Units and unorganized territory. Stationary and mobile tuberculosis clinics provide free diagnostic and consultative service to all residents; venereal disease clinics, operating in Vancouver and on a part-time basis throughout the Health Units, provide free diagnosis and treatment—where there is no clinic, the Health Department pays private physicians for treatment of indigent patients; maternal and child-health clinics, providing immunization and pre- and post-natal advice, are operated by public health nurses. Several specialized divisions of the Health Branch provide consultative service and guidance to the field staff, other departments, and official and voluntary agencies. There are branch laboratories in various parts of the Province and the Division of Laboratories distributes immunizing agents free of charge to doctors, health officers and public health nurses. There has been a recent expansion of the mental hygiene program. The Crease Clinic of Psychological Medicine was opened at Essondale in 1949 to function as an investigatory and active treatment centre.

Except in the two metropolitan areas where special federal grants are made under previous arrangements, approximately one-third of the cost of health services is borne by the local districts and the remainder by the Provincial Government.

Institutions for the hospital care of tubercular and of mental patients and Provincial Infirmaries for persons with incapacitating disabilities are operated by the Provincial Government; indigents are hospitalized in these institutions at public expense.

Hospital care is available to all residents through the compulsory prepayment plan administered by the Hospital Insurance Commission. The plan is financed by annual premiums, amounting in 1950 to \$21 for a person without dependants and \$33 for a person with one or more dependants, supplemented by provincial and municipal contributions.

Full medical, surgical and obstetrical care are provided to recipients of social assistance and to their dependants who are also covered under the terms of the Hospital Insurance Act, their premiums being paid by the Province.