

of 10.8 p.c. in cases. This trend is characterized by the increasing proportion of older patients treated for medical and surgical conditions and thus shows the growing impact of an aging population on health services. The average age of patients of both sexes was 54.3 in 1952, 59.2 in 1953, 62.5 in 1954, 64.0 in 1955 and 65.1 in 1956. The average age of male patients increased from 45.2 to 65.0 during the period and of female patients from 57.2 to 65.2. The percentage of cases under 45 years of age decreased from 40.8 in 1952 to 29.9 in 1956, while the percentage of cases 45 years or over increased from 58.4 to 69.7. Corresponding percentage changes are observed in the recorded visits.

The average number of visits per medical and surgical case increased from 11.1 in 1952 to 16.1 in 1956, or by 45 p.c.; the average visits per maternity case decreased from 2.9 to 2.5 or by 14 p.c.

The increase in the number of post-hospital cases from 10,915 in 1952 to 15,396 in 1956 and the increase in the percentage of such cases to total cases from 20.5 to 32.4 is an indication of the greater use being made of home care as supplementing hospital services.

The causes accounting for the largest proportion of visits in 1956, with their average visits per case were as follows:—

<i>Cause</i>	<i>Visits</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Visits</i>	<i>Average Visits per Case</i>
	No.		No.
Diabetes.....	121,708	15.9	46.2
Diseases of the heart.....	115,259	15.0	21.2
Diseases of the central nervous system and sense organs.....	93,279	12.2	28.7
Anæmias and other diseases of the blood and blood-forming organs.....	77,910	10.2	22.3
Malignant neoplasms.....	56,357	7.4	17.5
Arthritis and rheumatism.....	39,454	5.2	28.5

In the field of maternity and newborn care, there were 34,140 normal maternity cases attended by Victorian Order nurses in 1956; of these 11,770 were attended at the prenatal and 22,370 at the postnatal stage. These figures do not include 1,925 maternity cases involving complications. Care and health supervision was provided to 29,994 newborn babies during that year. A total of 18,044 sessions were held for expectant mothers, which had an enrolment of about 7,000 persons.

## PART II.—PUBLIC WELFARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Responsibility for social welfare in Canada is shared between the Federal Government, which is concerned largely with income security programs and the provision of services to special groups, and the provinces which delegate an important share of responsibility to the municipalities.

The creation of the Department of National Health and Welfare in 1944 established for the first time in the Federal Government a department in which public welfare is a major responsibility. The Department is charged with the administration of federal Acts relating to welfare which are not assigned by law to other departments. In addition to the general promotion of social welfare, the Welfare Branch of the Department administers