

Hygiene; Medical Rehabilitation; Mental Health; Nursing Services; Nutrition; Occupational Health; Radiation Protection; Public Health Engineering; Research Development; Health Grants; Health Resources; Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services; Health Facilities Design; Medical Care Insurance and Research and Statistics. In addition, the Information Services of the Department produces and distributes a variety of literature, films and radio programs to inform and educate the public on health subjects.

The Department also conducts a number of specialized services to preserve Health that are of national concern. These include: the Emergency Health Services which assist provincial and municipal governments to organize emergency medical, nursing, hospital and public health services; the Laboratory of Hygiene including the Virus Laboratory which serves as the National Typing and Reference Centre; and the Radiation Protection Division which is mainly responsible for safety measures to protect Canadian radiation workers (see p. 300). The Environmental Health Centre carries out advisory and research services in Occupational Health, Aerospace Medicine and Public Health Engineering, which deal with health problems of interprovincial and international traffic and water resources management.

Section 2.—Provincial and Local Health Services

Provincial governments are mainly responsible for the various health measures to preserve the health of individuals and communities. These are administered by the official and voluntary health agencies, hospitals and the teaching and research institutions in co-operation with the health professions. Health services fall into the broad categories of public health, hospital services and medical care programs; in addition to general programs, there are organized services for specific diseases and for the chronically ill and disabled generally.

Although the pattern of services is broadly similar, provincial health legislation, financing and administration vary to some degree. Most health functions are exercised by the provincial health departments but in some provinces certain programs, such as hospital insurance, medical care insurance, tuberculosis control, cancer control or alcoholism programs, may be administered by separate public agencies directly accountable to the Minister of Health. Voluntary organizations also provide specialized health services, often with some support from tax funds in the form of payment for services or support grants.

In general, the provincial health departments carry out over-all planning and direction of public health programs, administer certain specialized health programs, and assist through technical and financial aid the regional or county health units and city health departments that have been delegated responsibility for the basic public health services. In most provinces, the health unit systems, which serve mainly rural areas, are operated either provincially or jointly by the province with the local authority having jurisdiction over county, municipality or larger area, while city health departments are administered by municipal or metropolitan boards of health. Several provincial health departments also directly administer health services to northern unorganized territories. The nucleus staff of a local health unit or department usually is composed of a full-time medical officer of health, a number of public health nurses and a public health inspector.

Local official programs to safeguard community health are concerned with environmental sanitation to ensure safe water, milk and foods; prevention and control of infectious diseases; the improvement of maternal, child and school health; dental health; registration of vital statistics; and health education of the public. In addition, the larger city health departments have developed specialized services in such areas as mental health, home care, and rehabilitation of the chronically ill and handicapped. More recently, a few health units and departments have started health screening for chronic conditions and family planning clinics. The city health departments also participate to some degree with the provincial authorities in accident prevention and in the health aspects of measures to control air, water and soil pollution.