

influencing the health of Canadians. The branch collaborates with other branches of the department in developing proposals. It has specialists in the fields of medicine, pharmacy, epidemiology, economics, sociology, demography, political science, statistics and administration.

Standards and consultation. The national health and welfare department extends technical advisory services to provincial agencies, universities and other organizations for the development of health programs, health manpower and health research. Consultative services are available through the various administrative units of the department.

The health standards directorate co-operates with provinces, professional associations, universities and other organizations to establish and promote standards and directives for health services, clinical practice and health personnel. The health consultants directorate studies the health-related needs of Canadians, the means available to meet those needs, and the use of health resources. It provides information and consulting services particularly about health systems, plans and tenders for facilities, hospital administration, health personnel, community health and health promotion. Other technical advice is available through programs directly operated by the department for health protection including the safety of foods, drugs, and health appliances, environmental health, disease control and other specialized areas.

Canada health survey. The Canada health survey is a joint responsibility of the national health and welfare department and Statistics Canada. It was developed to obtain better data on the health status and risk exposure of the Canadian population and to complement existing information which comes primarily from vital statistics and medical care records. It is a continuing monitoring, not just of disease and disability, but also of relevant facts on lifestyle, environment and socio-economic factors. Information comes from an interview and questionnaire. Observed information comes from physical measurements and blood tests. The survey began in the spring of 1978. Approximately 12,000 homes (38,000 individuals) are visited each year. One-third of the households participate in the physical measures portion of the survey.

International health services

5.4.5

Through the national health and welfare department, Canada participates in the activities of the Commonwealth ministers of health, the Pan-American Health Organization, the World Health Organization, other United Nations specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations whose programs have a substantial health component. Similarly the department takes part in bilateral exchanges with countries that have scientific, technological or cultural arrangements with Canada.

In addition, each year Canadian experts in public health and in the health sciences undertake specific assignments abroad as special advisers or consultants at the request of the World Health Organization, the Pan-American Health Organization or one of the other agencies.

The department enforces regulations governing the handling and shipping of shellfish under an international shellfish agreement between Canada and the United States. Other responsibilities include the custody and distribution of biological, vitamin and hormone standards for the World Health Organization and certain duties in connection with an international convention on narcotic drugs.

Provincial and local health services

5.5

Regulation of health care, operation of health insurance programs and direct provision of some specialized services rest with the provincial governments; some health responsibilities are delegated to local authorities. Although provinces generally assign primary responsibility for health to one department, the distribution of function varies from one province to another. Some provinces have combined health and social services within the same department. Others maintain liaison between departments responsible for these related services.