

The cash payments, approximating the value of the tax room transferred, are per capita payments calculated in accordance with the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Established Programs Financing Act, 1977. These payments will be escalated yearly in accordance with changes in the GNP, and adjusted gradually so that all provinces at the end of five years will be receiving equal per capita cash contributions. The federal government is also making additional equal per capita cash contributions yearly to the provinces to contribute toward the costs of certain extended health care services.

Constitutional responsibilities in the health field

5.2.2

Government involvement in health care services in 1867, at Confederation, was minimal. For the most part the individual was compelled to rely on his own resources and those of his family group, and hospitals were administered and financed by private charities and religious organizations.

The only specific references to health in the distribution of legislative powers under the British North America Act allocate to Parliament jurisdiction over quarantine and the establishment and maintenance of marine hospitals, and to provincial legislatures jurisdiction over the establishment, maintenance and management of hospitals, asylums, charities and charitable institutions in and for the province, other than marine hospitals. In 1867 this latter reference probably was meant to cover most health care services. Since the provinces were assigned jurisdiction over generally all matters of a merely local or private nature in the province, it is probable that this power was deemed to cover health care, while the provincial power over municipal institutions provided a convenient means for dealing with such matters. Thus provision of health care services has been traditionally acknowledged as primarily a provincial responsibility. But a measure of responsibility in health matters has been expressed over the years in many federal programs and policies.

Federal-provincial co-operation

5.2.3

Since the federal and provincial governments share responsibility for dealing with health matters, a formal structure has been established for federal-provincial co-operation. It comprises the following: conference of ministers of health; conference of deputy ministers of health; and federal-provincial advisory committees on institutional care services, community care services, health promotion and lifestyle, environmental and occupational health and health manpower. The conferences of ministers and deputy ministers of health involve matters of promotion, protection, maintenance and restoration of the health of the Canadian people. Normally, the conference of ministers meets annually and the conference of deputy ministers twice a year. The five advisory committees facilitate the work of the ministers and deputy ministers, and assist them in achieving objectives, identifying major issues and solving problems. They may set up groups to deal with particular subjects requiring more detailed study.

Federal health services

5.2.4

The national health and welfare department is the principal federal agency in health matters. It is responsible for the overall promotion, preservation, and restoration of the health of Canadians, and for their social security and social welfare. The department acts in conjunction with other federal agencies and with provincial and local services. The provincial governments actually administer health services. Although the patterns of health services are similar, their organization and administration vary from province to province.

Other federal agencies which carry out specialized health functions include the health division, Statistics Canada, which gathers health and vital statistics, the veterans affairs department which administers hospitals and health services for war veterans, and the agriculture department which has certain responsibilities for health aspects of food production. The fitness and amateur sport program encourages Canadians to participate in activities oriented to fitness and recreation.

Branches of the national health and welfare department are responsible for health protection, medical services, and health services and promotion. The Medical Research