

provincial governments relating to manufacturers' facilities and their compliance with standards for their products.

**Environmental health.** Environmental health responsibilities include the study of adverse effects on human health of the chemical and physical environment, and ensuring the safety, effectiveness, and non-fraudulent nature of medical devices. Health hazard assessments are developed for work and home environments, household products, and air and water criteria. Research on radiation hazards is conducted and environmental and occupational exposures are monitored. The health and welfare department enforces the Radiation Emitting Devices Act and that portion of the Food and Drugs Act dealing with medical devices and radioactive pharmaceuticals, and administers the Hazardous Products Act jointly with the consumer and corporate affairs department. The Environmental Contaminants Act provides for the collection of data and investigation of substances that may be a danger to human health or the environment and, when necessary, recommendation of restricted or prohibited use of substances.

**Disease control.** A laboratory centre is involved in developing improved diagnostic procedures and other measures to combat communicable disease agents. Methods are developed for detecting and preventing disease, and producing and distributing standardized diagnostic reagents to federal, provincial and other health organizations. A national reference service is provided to identify disease-producing bacteria, viruses and parasites, and a co-operative federal-provincial program assures laboratory quality and proficiency testing. Surveillance of birth defects, poisonings and adverse drug reactions is maintained. Epidemiological research is carried out on communicable and non-communicable diseases.

### **Fitness and amateur sport**

5.5.3

Projects are designed to promote an awareness of physical fitness and provide Canadians with information on fitness programs. Major areas of interest have been fitness and health, employee fitness, fitness trails and the development of the Canadian home fitness test. An exercise break program has been developed to help fitness leaders and health professionals introduce the benefits of physical activity in business, industry and educational institutions.

The Canada fitness award program was developed to encourage boys and girls, aged 7 to 17, to strive for fitness and excellence. The program awards bronze, silver and gold crests and awards of excellence on the basis of test results. This popular test is widely used by schools and youth organizations.

One of the more visible programs is a sports demonstration project. This project tours Canada each summer and gives residents the opportunity to try a variety of physical skills, such as skiing on artificial snow, skating on a specially-designed plastic surface or batting balls pitched from an automatic pitching machine.

Additional details on fitness and sport programs are included in Chapter 17, Cultural activities and leisure.

### **Research and planning**

5.6

**Medical Research Council.** Most federal grants supporting health science research in universities and hospitals are channelled through a medical research council which reports to Parliament through the minister of national health and welfare. The council provides grants in aid of operating and equipment requirements for research projects and direct support for a limited number of investigators and research trainees. It offers incentives for the development of research in highly productive fields where major contributions may be expected and in fields or regions where research is not adequately developed. Support is given for meetings, international scientific activities and exchange of scientists.

**Health research and development.** The NHW department obtains information and evaluates and develops options for the achievement of the promotion, protection,