



OVERVIEW

During the past 50 years many infectious diseases that were once prevalent in Canada have been virtually eliminated. From 1931 to 1981 life expectancy at birth increased from 60 to 72 years for men and from 62 to nearly 79 years for women. Over the same period infant mortality rates declined from 85 per 1,000 live births to only 9.6.

As Canada moved into public insurance coverage of health care services, mortality declined. In 1982 the leading causes of death were cardiovascular diseases (46%), cancer (26%) and accidents (5%).

A new Canada Health Act in April 1984 consolidated earlier hospital and medical care insurance legislation, authorized continuing federal health transfers to the provinces and incorporated the provisions for extended health care services of the 1977 established programs financing legislation. It provided that the dollar value of extra billing by physicians in a province and user charges by hospitals would be deducted from federal contributions.