

Drugs. On the principle that Canadians should have access to drugs that are both safe and effective, new drugs are cleared for marketing and post-marketing surveillance is maintained. Manufacturers of new drugs with unknown properties are required by law to submit evidence of the safety and effectiveness of their products, including information about therapeutic properties and side effects.

Environmental health. Responsibilities include studying 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, air and water. Research is conducted on radiation hazards, and adverse effects of environmental chemicals.

Disease control. A laboratory centre in the health and welfare department is developing improved diagnostic procedures and other measures to combat communicable disease agents, and is 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. A co-operative federal-provincial program assures laboratory quality and proficiency testing. Communicable disease control is addressed through epidemic outbreak investigations, seasonal surveillance of influenza, monitoring of sexually transmitted diseases and newly emerging conditions such as toxic shock syndrome and acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Surveillance is maintained of birth defects, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, poisoning and adverse drug reaction.

3.2.4 Public health and community health

Health departments, in co-operation with regional and local health authorities, administer such services as environmental sanitation, communicable disease control, maternal and child health, school health, nutrition, dental health, occupational health, public health laboratories and vital statistics. Most provinces have delegated certain responsibilities to health units in rural regions and to municipal health departments in urban centres. Several provinces provide services directly to their thinly populated northern areas.

Maternal and child health. Consultant services of health departments co-operate with the public health nursing services. The maternal and child health services also undertake studies and help train nursing personnel. At the local level, public health nurses provide services to mothers, the newborn and children through clinics, home and hospital visits and school health services.

Nutrition and health education. Health departments and some municipal or regional health offices employ nutrition consultants to extend guidance to

health and welfare agencies, schools, nursing homes, various community service agencies and other institutions and hospitals. They provide diet counselling to selected patient groups such as diabetics, and conduct nutritional surveys and other research. Most provincial health departments have a division or unit of health education. Many educational activities are directed to accident prevention and to changing habits harmful to health, such as smoking and the excessive use of alcohol and other drugs.

Dental health. Public health programs have been largely preventive, but emphasis is now being given to dental treatment. Dental clinics conducted by local health services are generally restricted to pre-school and younger school-age groups. A number of provinces send dental teams to remote areas. All provinces have dental care schemes of varying coverage for welfare recipients. Other dental health programs are directed to training dentists, dental hygienists, nurses, therapists and assistants, conducting dental surveys and extending water fluoridation.

Communicable disease control. The larger provincial health departments have divisions of communicable disease control. In others this function is combined with one or more community health services. Local health authorities organize public clinics for immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, whooping cough, rubella and measles.

Public health laboratories. Most provinces maintain a central public health laboratory and have branch laboratories to assist local health agencies and the medical profession in protection of community health and control of infectious diseases. Public health bacteriology (testing of milk, water and food), diagnostic bacteriology and pathology are the principal functions of the laboratory service, together with medical testing for physicians and hospitals.

Rehabilitation and home care. Rehabilitation services are provided by public and voluntary agencies in several types of institution, including hospitals, separate in-patient facilities, worker compensation board centres, and out-patient centres. Financing is from various federal, provincial and voluntary agency sources. Every province includes some institution-based services under hospital and medical care insurance. In some provinces coverage is extended to the supply and fitting of certain prosthetic and corrective devices.

Home care has developed in a variety of ways. Some programs are oriented to specific disease categories. Some are attached to specific hospitals or community centres. Others are integral parts of comprehensive health care delivery systems. The range of services varies from nursing services alone to a complete array of health and social services. Some programs concentrate on patients requiring short-term active treatment. Others treat convalescent or