

extend primary health care services in Canadian communities, with additional health specialties made available as required through collaborative regional referral plans under provincial co-ordination and occasionally involving inter-provincial co-ordination for the more specialized or rare treatment requirements.

Primary health care and evolving patterns of health services. All traditional institutional and professional health services have now been available to all Canadians for about two decades. Changes in morbidity and mortality patterns worldwide, along with changing aspirations and values relating to personal, social and environmental well-being, have highlighted the importance of well-being and the quality of life, health promotion and disease prevention. Thus, concerns for health and well-being now focus on responsible health behaviours, safer environments, and on patient awareness and participation in health matters, particularly in health care choices. Primary health care at the community level embraces a comprehensive range of public, voluntary, professional and consumer health organizations. These new partners in health are dedicated to such concerns as health education, early detection, accident prevention, mental health, reproductive health, palliative care, women's health, occupational health, environmental health, neglect and family violence, the health of immigrant and refugee groups and many others.

Standards. The provincial and territorial responsibility for health sciences and educational programs, certification of health personnel, allocation and management of health care resources and delivery of health care services creates a decentralized health care delivery system at the provincial and territorial level. This decentralized responsibility requires national networking, co-ordination, information-sharing, as well as joint planning and standard-setting, which are developed under the aegis of the federal and provincial committee structure and the professional associations.

To improve quality of care across Canada and establish national frameworks of common goals, policies and procedures, guidelines are developed for special services in hospitals and clinical guidelines for various disciplines. These guidelines address a wide range of health concerns including infection control, vital organ transplantation, periodic health examinations, newborn care, dental hygiene, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

3.2.4 Health protection

Federal and provincial programs protect the public against unsafe foods, drugs, cosmetics, and medical and radiation-emitting devices, against harmful microbiological agents, technological and social environments, against environmental pollutants and contaminants, and against fraudulent drugs and devices.

Food safety, cleanliness and nutritional quality standards are developed through laboratory research and evaluation of data produced by private and public sectors, and international sources. Standards are maintained by inspection and analysis of foods of both domestic and imported origin. Regulations prescribe maximum levels for residue of agricultural chemicals in foods and use of food additives. Both are subject to pre-market evaluation before they can be used in food sold in Canada.

Drugs. On the principle that Canadians should have access to drugs that are both safe and effective and that 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, investigating the health effects of tobacco smoke, and ensuring the safety, effectiveness and non-fraudulent nature of radiation-emitting and medical devices. Health hazard assessments are developed for work and home environments, pesticides, household products, air and water. Research is conducted on radiation hazards, and adverse effects of environmental chemicals.

Disease control. A laboratory centre in Health and Welfare Canada 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 Reye syndrome and Acquired Immunodeficiency