

Local public health services are available to more than one-quarter of the population through 27 health units administered locally but with consultative services and financial support supplied by the Department. Elsewhere, local services are organized through full- or part-time municipal health departments, and by the Province in unorganized territory. Provincial grants are made to local boards of health for school dental services and venereal disease clinics.

Public health legislation affecting water supplies, milk and food and other environmental sanitation is administered by the Department. Maternal and child health care is provided through clinics and, in addition, any expectant mother may receive one free pre-natal examination. Systematic dental examinations combined with instruction in dental hygiene have been initiated in five local health units, and a number of school dental-treatment clinics have been established, financed largely by municipalities. In northern areas, two railway dental cars operated by the Province provide treatment and three mobile units operated by the Red Cross also conduct an educational and treatment service in less-populated districts.

The Central Laboratory and 15 branch laboratories (nine provincially operated and six subsidized) carry out bacteriological and other examinations for clinics, hospitals and private physicians. Biologicals and other materials for the prevention and control of communicable diseases, insulin for indigent diabetics and streptomycin for tuberculous patients are distributed free of charge by the Department. Chest clinics, held in approximately 200 centres, are financed mainly through funds of local tuberculosis associations and the Department. The Province pays the major portion of the cost of maintaining patients in sanatoria. Cancer control is administered by the Ontario Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation and provincial grants are given to this organization to subsidize diagnosis and treatment in eight clinics. Care is provided for the mentally ill in 17 institutions operated by the Province. Special units are concerned with the care of epileptics, the tubercular and the criminally insane. In addition, the Province operates four travelling mental health clinics. A provincial hospital for alcoholics and a treatment clinic have recently been opened.

A formal arrangement between the Province and the Ontario Medical Association makes limited medical services available to the recipients of all types of public assistance, including former means-test old age pensioners now receiving the universal pension, and persons receiving old age assistance, blindness allowances, mothers' allowances, and unemployment relief. New applicants for the universal old age pension may qualify under the medical plan on a means-test basis. Recipients of Ontario's disabled persons' allowances (for permanently disabled persons 18 to 65 years of age) have also been included since the inauguration of this new categorical program in July 1952. The medical program includes the services of a physician in his office or the patient's home, necessary consultations, home confinements, and emergency drugs. With the exception of unemployment relief cases where the costs are shared equally by the Province and the responsible municipality, the Province assumes the costs of the monthly per capita payments made for such services.

Provincial per diem grants, which vary according to hospital size, are paid to all public hospitals on the basis of public-ward bed days. Special per diem grants are also made by municipalities on behalf of hospitalized patients, including any persons under the public assistance or pension schemes who can qualify for free hospitalization.