

# 1. THE MEXICAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

## THREE LEVELS OF SERVICE

Public sector medical units in Mexico are classified into three levels of care:

- primary care includes out-patient services which are primarily diagnostic, with no hospitalization facilities;
- second level medical units are general hospitals that may or may not offer specialized services; and
- third level facilities provide hospitalization and specialized medical treatment, and do not offer out-patient facilities.

The *Sistema Nacional de Salud*, Mexican Health Care System, has three major components. It is divided into separate systems for those who are employed in the formal economy and for those who are not. Mexicans who can afford to pay have the third alternative of using private health care facilities, which tend to offer faster service.

The body responsible for health care policy and regulation throughout Mexico is the *Secretaría de Salud (SS)*, Secretariat of Health. The *SS* also delivers medical services to the poorer segments of Mexican society through a system of clinics and hospitals.

## OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, 1992

Component	Spending (U.S.\$ millions)	Population (millions)
<b>Open System:</b>	<b>2,030</b>	<b>42.0</b>
<i>Secretaría de Salud (SS)</i> , Secretariat of Health	1,484	27.9
<i>Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (IMSS)</i> , Mexican Institute for Social Security	214	10.9
<i>Departamento del Distrito Federal (DDF)</i> , Department of the Federal District	119	3.2
<i>Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF)</i> , National System for the Development of the Family	213	—
<b>Premium Based System:</b>	<b>7,894</b>	<b>47.8</b>
<i>Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (IMSS)</i> , Mexican Institute for Social Security	6,279	37.5
<i>Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado (ISSSTE)</i> , Institute of Security and Social Services for Public Service Employees	1,045	8.6
<i>Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX)</i> , the state-owned oil company	270	0.8
Others	300	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,924</b>	<b>89.8</b>

Source: Adapted from *Recursos y Servicios - Sistema Nacional de Salud*, Boletín de Información Estadística, Número 12, 1992.

## NATIONAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Mexico's *Sistema Nacional de Salud*, National Health Care System, has been substantially expanded in recent years, and now makes health care services available to virtually every Mexican. Primary care clinics have been established in a growing number of remote towns and villages. By the end of 1992, health care services were available to an estimated 90 million people. The budgets of the nine principal entities in the National Health Care System totaled just under US \$10 billion (see table).

