

It is now believed that the disease was pretty widely disseminated throughout the country before it was recognized in its epidemic state. This failure to recognize the early cases appears to have largely been due to the fact that every interest was then centered on the war.

Above are the important facts developed by the United States Public Health Service after a careful survey and investigation of the influenza pandemic of 1918-19, carried on in every State and important city, and even in foreign countries.

No one of the many experts of the Service would make a more positive forecast of the all-important question, will there be a recurrence? All agreed, however, that a recurrence was not unlikely, and in the face of the known facts, that it would be wise to be prepared, more with a view of being on the safe side than actually anticipating danger.

The following excerpts from the Government report are published for the benefit of the public and health officers in the hope that this will serve to set at rest the daily publication in the newspapers of statements, which on one hand are calculated to lull the public into a sense of false security and on the other so unduly cause alarm.

Contrary to the opinion expressed frequently during the early weeks of last year's pandemic by a number of observers, the studies of the U.S. Public Health Service indicate that the epidemic was not a fresh importation from abroad. Careful study of the mortality statistics of the United States shows that there were a number of extensive though mild forerunners of the pandemic during the previous three or four years. In Chicago and New York in the winter of 1915-16 for example, these were sufficiently well marked to occasion considerable public comment at the time, leading in the latter city, to a well organized "Don't spit, don't sneeze" campaign on the part of the health authorities. The reports of the U.S. Public Health Service of January, 1916, shows influenza to be epidemic in 22 states, including practically all sections of the United States. The epidemic was generally of a mild type and has since been almost forgotten. It occasioned, however, a noticeable increase in the recorded death rate from pneumonia.

In the spring of 1918 there was another sharp rise in the mortality rate from pneumonia. In the larger cities of the Atlantic seaboard these increases occurred during January, February and March. In the rest of the country, especially the central and western states, the increases occurred in April, a month during which pneumonia mortality is generally on the decline. This increase was sufficient to indicate a strong departure from the normal. The increased mortality rate extended into May and in some areas even longer.