

Since 1966, the Federal Government has, under the Canada Assistance Plan, paid half the cost for needy persons of personal health-care services not already insured under the hospital and medical insurance legislation. The coverage at present for the principal services is as follows:

- Physicians' services** Following the implementation of public medical-care insurance plans in the provinces, as already described, provincial welfare recipients became automatically enrolled for insured services, and without premium payment in applicable provinces. Under such programs for recipients of welfare, payment-rates to physicians are identical to those applicable to the general population. Benefits may be a little broader, and may include such ordinarily non-insured items as travelling allowance and telephoned advice, the cost of these additional items being generally shared under the Canada Assistance Plan. Extra-billing by physicians, where practised, is usually waived.
- Hospital care** Hospital-care insurance programs in every province provide automatic coverage to welfare-allowance recipients without payment of premiums or charges by them.
- Prescribed-drug benefits** In British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Quebec and Newfoundland, virtually all provincial public-assistance recipients are enrolled under schemes providing prescribed-drug benefits. In Quebec, recipients of the Guaranteed Income Supplement are entitled to the same benefits as social assistance recipients. Drug benefits consist of practically all available prescription drugs and some unprescribed ones. Payment-rates to pharmacies or dispensing physicians are negotiated by provincial governments. In Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, certain patients may be required to pay co-charges.
- The Ontario and Nova Scotia governments subsidize the cost of drugs provided by municipalities operating welfare programs for those in need. Direct supplemental drug allowances are also available to the needy, under provincial auspices.
- Most provinces supply, through their health departments, certain drugs that are important in the prevention of infections (venereal disease, rheumatic fever, and tuberculosis), where therapy costs can be very high.
- Dental-care benefits** Dental benefit plans are operated for selected recipients of welfare in most provinces. In British Columbia, special means tests are applied to public-assistance recipients in order to qualify them for enrolment. A separate program is operated in that province for the children under 13 years of age of all welfare