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HEALTH AND WELFARE IN CANADA

(Prepared in the Research and Statistics Directorate,
Department of National Health and Welfare)

PART I -- HEALTH SERVICES

Responsibility for the administration of health-care services in Canada is a direct concern of provincial governments, with municipalities often exercising considerable authority over matters delegated to them by provincial legislatures. The Federal Government has jurisdiction over a number of health matters of national scope and provides important financial assistance to provincial health and hospital services. All levels of government are aided by a network of voluntary agencies in different health fields.

The Department of National Health and Welfare is the chief federal agency in health matters. The health side of the Department is organized into four branches -- Food and Drugs, Medical Services, Health Insurance and Resources, and Health Services. Through the Food and Drug Branch the Department is responsible for protecting the Canadian public from hazards to health of the foods, drugs, cosmetics, and medical devices sold to the public. The Medical Services Branch operates quarantine and immigration medical services and provides health services to Indians and Eskimos and other special groups. The Health Services Branch advises and provides consultative services to provincial and local health agencies on numerous matters concerning the health of Canadians. Technical advisory services are also provided to the provinces through the Health Insurance and Resources Branch, which administers a number of shared-cost programs.

Under the Medical Care Act, the Federal Government contributes 50 per cent of the average costs for each person of provincial medical insurance plans meeting specified conditions. The Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act provides for federal cost-sharing of provincial hospital insurance programs. The Health Resources Fund provides the provinces with up to 50 per cent of capital costs towards the building, renovating, or equipping of facilities for research and for training health personnel. The National Health Grants are designed to broaden basic health services and control specific diseases. Under the Canada Assistance Plan, the Federal Government contributes 50 per cent of the costs of health-care services that provinces make available to persons who are eligible because of proven financial need.

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