

Over the years, federal departments have provided direct health care to certain groups: the Department of National Health and Welfare administers health services to Indians, Eskimos and other residents of the two northern territories, to immigrants, seamen and other groups; the Department of Veterans Affairs operates a nation-wide system of hospital, treatment and domiciliary care services for disability pensioners and indigent veterans.

Control and regulatory functions relating to matters of national health concerns, also carried out by the federal Health Department, include a programme to ensure the purity and safety of food and drugs, the activities of the national Environmental Health Centre, which provides research, control, and advisory services on such matters as water-resources management, air pollution and other environmental health problems, a radiation-protection programme, and the testing research advisory services of the Laboratory of Hygiene. The Department of Agriculture also carries specific responsibilities connected with food production to protect the public health.

Health research is conducted or supported by a number of federal agencies: the Medical Research Council, the National Research Council, the Defence Research Board, the Departments of National Health and Welfare and of Veterans Affairs. The principal federal agencies concerned with health statistics are the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and the Research and Statistics Directorate of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

Public Health Services

Provincial health departments, together with city health departments and rural health units, carry out the basic preventive health services and specialized services for specific diseases and various health problems. The traditional public health services comprise environmental sanitation, communicable disease control, maternal and child health, nutrition, dental health, occupational health, public health laboratories and vital statistics. Also well established are the provincial programmes for treatment of the venereal diseases, tuberculosis, cancer, mental illness, mental retardation and specialized services for institutional and community or home care of the chronically ill, some of which are operated by voluntary agencies aided by public grants.

More emphasis is being given to the newer environmental health problems of air and water pollution, protection of radiation workers, and the hazards of pesticides. Special programmes have been designed to deal more effectively with other health problems, such as traffic-safety measures and poison-control centres, rehabilitation of the chronically ill and disabled, health education on the effects of smoking and on maternal and child health, and family-planning activities.

Tuberculosis Services: Despite the decline in the incidence of tuberculosis and associated disability, provincial health departments have not lessened their anti-tuberculosis activities. In most provinces, there is an organized tuberculosis control division that maintains a tuberculosis case registry, supervises the preventive and case-finding activities of the local health services and provides free treatment in out-patient clinics and sanatoria; in four provinces the sanatoria are privately operated but are supported by tax funds. Voluntary tuberculosis associations are active in each province in case-finding and health education. During 1965, the number of first admissions to some 40 sanatoria dropped to 4,197 patients, or 21.4 per 100,000 population.