

under schemes providing prescribed-drug benefits. In Manitoba a drug program covers persons designated as aged and infirm, recipients of mothers' allowances and their dependents, government wards, and indigent persons in unorganized territory. A variety of systems of drug benefit and non-benefit lists are employed and payment rates to pharmacies or dispensing physicians are negotiated by provincial governments. Under several schemes co-charges are levied on patients.

Drugs provided at local initiative in Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Quebec are sharable under provincial legislation, as well as under the Canada Assistance Plan.

#### *Dental Care Benefits*

Dental benefit plans are operated for selected recipients of welfare in the four Western provinces and in Ontario. 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 recipients. The Ontario program provides dental benefits to persons in receipt of mothers' allowances and dependent fathers' allowances. This includes parents and their children under the age of 18. All provincial public-assistance recipients qualify for dental benefits of schemes operated in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Benefits under these dental plans typically exclude certain specified services and require prior authorization for some services. In the three most westerly provinces, posterior bridgework, prophylaxis and paedodontics are excluded. Prior authorization is required in British Columbia and Saskatchewan for dentures, relines, gold inlays, orthodontia and periodontia. Payments to dentists are at negotiated fixed rates under each of these plans. The patient is required to pay a co-charge of approximately 50 per cent of the cost of dentures in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

All dental-care expenditures by municipalities in Ontario in respect to welfare recipients are shared by the province and through the Canada Assistance Plan.

A limited range of in-hospital dental surgery performed by physicians and dentists is a benefit under provincial medical-care insurance plans.

#### *Optical Care Benefits*

Health benefit schemes for welfare recipients included certain optical care services and eyeglasses in the four most westerly provinces.

With the nation-wide implementation of public medical-care insurance programs, refractions performed by physicians became general benefits under most schemes, and refractions by optometrists as well in a number of provinces.

Frames, lenses, and fittings continue to be benefits of the provincial health benefit schemes in the Western provinces. Certain restrictions typically govern the amount which will be paid for frames, e.g., for cosmetic purposes.