

Under the Medical Care Act, the Federal Government contributes, nationally, 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 and 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.

The various agencies in Canada concerned about environmental health are in the process of developing and implementing programs to assess and determine the health effects and to assess and control the levels of air and water pollution, radiation, industrial toxicants, and other factors of the general, occupational and home environments known to be, or suspected of being, deleterious to human health. The complexity of their task requires the work of specialists in a variety of disciplines falling within the broad spectrum of physical, life and engineering sciences and the co-operative efforts of governments and other agencies. Individual tasks include field surveys and interpretation of air and water pollution, research into health effects and their causes from all kinds of toxicants, development of guides and standards for pollutants such as chemicals and other hazards in both the working and general environment, and the specifying of health and safety standards for radiation-emitting devices.

The Federal Government discharges its responsibilities in environmental health through the Environmental Health Directorate of the Department of National Health and Welfare by providing regulatory authorities with the most authoritative assessments of the effect of environmental factors on human health and carrying out its statutory activities in the related fields of radiation protection and occupational hygiene.

Seven of the ten provinces have agencies in their health departments to deal with occupational and environmental health problems. As with the Federal Government, there is a close liaison between the health officials and officials responsible for assessment and control of the environment. Co-ordination of the many activities within provinces and between the provinces and the Federal Government is usually provided by advisory boards and committees.

Health research is conducted or supported by a number of federal agencies: the Medical Research Council, the Defence Research Board, and the Departments of National Health and Welfare and Veterans Affairs. The National Research Council conducts studies in radiation biology and other life sciences important to health. The principal federal agencies concerned with health statistics are Statistics Canada, the Health Economics and Statistics Directorate of the Department of National Health and Welfare, and, as a by-product of program activities, certain other units in the Department.