

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES 1/
1953 - 1954

Peak levels were reached in 1954 for many types of maternal and child health services provided by State and local health departments. Furthermore, according to reports received from official health agencies, more mothers and children were served in almost every type of service than had been in the previous year. This is in contrast to the downward trend which had been exhibited in 1952 and 1953 for several of the services. Among the most important of the services which reached new high levels were those provided by public health nurses to infants and preschool children and to mothers during the postpartum period. Inspections by dentists and dental hygienists of preschool and school children were also at a higher level than ever before. In contrast, decreases occurred in physicians' services to children past the infancy period and in nursing services to children of school age.

Maternity services

About 137,000 expectant mothers received medical service at prenatal clinics during 1954, more than in any other year on record except 1951. These women averaged 3 visits each to clinics during the year, about the same as in earlier years. In addition, 263,000 expectant mothers were given antepartum nursing service, close to the highest number to receive such service since World War II. There were 659,000 field and office nursing visits made for this purpose.

At the time of delivery some 2,700 mothers received nursing service through State and local health departments. Although this service has increased somewhat in the past two years, it remains quite low in contrast to the period prior to World War II. In those earlier years, however, the proportion of births outside hospitals was much higher than now.

1/ Services administered or supervised by State health agencies under the Social Security Act, Title V, Part 1.

Postpartum medical examinations were given to 53,000 mothers, an increase of almost 7 percent over 1953. In addition, 294,000 women received nursing service in the postpartum period, a high point in a trend which has gone generally upward since 1937. Nurses continued to provide an average of 2 postpartum nursing visits for each mother in 1954.

Staff members of health departments provided 28,000 visits for the purpose of giving supervision to midwives. This is one of the few types of service showing a decrease in 1954, being about 2,000 below the number for 1953. This service has been dropping since 1941, a trend to be expected with the gradual decrease of the number of deliveries attended by midwives.

Infant health services

Among the principal increases in service in 1954 were those provided to infants; both medical and nursing services reached larger groups than ever before. About 442,000 infants attended well child conferences, 30,000 more than in 1953. There were 1,218,000 visits to these conferences, or an average of almost 3 for each infant.

For the first time over 700,000 infants received nursing service, an increase over the previous year of more than 40,000, or 6 percent. Field and office nursing visits for these infants reached a level of 1,700,000, or an average of almost $2\frac{1}{2}$ each.

Preschool health services

Among the preschool group, 575,000 children attended well-child clinics, a decrease of 3 percent from the previous year. These children averaged about 2 visits each, as they had in earlier years. Nursing service and dental inspections for this group, however, reached new high levels in 1954. There were 758,000 preschool children who received nursing service at an average of 2 visits per child. Dental inspections were provided for 97,000 preschool children, 6 percent more than in 1953.

School health services

School medical and nursing services under the maternal and child health program declined in 1954, but the number of dental inspections increased substantially. About 2,626,000 school children received examinations by physicians; in addition, there were 2,333,000 field or office visits by nurses, a decrease of 13 percent from the previous year. About 3,050,000 inspections were made by dentists and dental hygienists, 14 percent more than in 1953.

Immunizations

Further increases were made in the number of persons immunized for diphtheria and smallpox during 1954. The 2,073,000 smallpox vaccinations given through State and local health departments exceeded slightly the number provided in 1953, while the number of immunizations against diphtheria passed the level of 2,000,000 for the first time in 1954. About half of these immunizations were provided to children 5 years old and over. The numbers of persons immunized for diphtheria increased in all age groups, with the greatest relative increase among preschool children.

The attached table presents a summary of data on maternal and child health services administered or supervised by State health agencies during 1953 and 1954.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES¹
1953 - 1954
(preliminary)

Type of service	Number reported		Percentage change ²
	1954	1953	
MEDICAL SERVICES			
Maternity service			
Cases admitted to antepartum medical service....	187,000	178,000	5.2
Visits by antepartum cases to medical conferences.....	571,000	526,000	8.5
Cases given postpartum medical examination.....	53,000	49,000	6.6
Infant hygiene			
Individuals admitted to medical service.....	442,000	412,000	7.3
Visits to medical conferences.....	1,216,000	1,180,000	5.0
Preschool hygiene			
Individuals admitted to medical service.....	575,000	592,000	-3.0
Visits to medical conferences.....	1,074,000	1,109,000	-3.2
School hygiene			
Examinations by physicians.....	2,626,000	2,737,000	-4.1
PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING SERVICES			
Maternity service			
Cases admitted to antepartum nursing service....	263,000	257,000	2.5
Field and office visits to and by antepartum cases.....	659,000	645,000	2.3
Cases given nursing service at delivery.....	2,700	2,400	12.0
Cases admitted to postpartum nursing service....	294,000	279,000	5.2
Nursing visits to postpartum cases.....	564,000	544,000	3.8
Infant hygiene			
Individuals admitted to nursing service.....	705,000	664,000	6.2
Field and office nursing visits.....	1,700,000	1,664,000	2.1
Preschool hygiene			
Individuals admitted to nursing service.....	758,000	744,000	1.9
Field and office nursing visits.....	1,568,000	1,498,000	4.7
School hygiene			
Field and office nursing visits.....	2,333,000	2,668,000	-12.6
IMMUNIZATIONS			
Smallpox.....	2,073,000	2,062,000	0.6
Diphtheria, total.....	2,133,000 ³	1,977,000 ⁴	7.9
Under 1 year.....	430,000	413,000	4.1
1-4 years.....	596,000	521,000	14.4
5 years and over.....	1,056,000	949,000	11.3
DENTAL INSPECTIONS			
Inspections by dentists or dental hygienists			
Preschool children.....	97,000	92,000	5.8
School children.....	3,050,000	2,668,000	14.3
MIDWIFE SUPERVISION			
Visits for midwife supervision.....	28,000	30,000	-6.3

¹Based on State reports (Form MCH-51) on services administered or supervised by the State health agencies under title V, part 1, of the Social Security Act, in the 48 States, Alaska, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

²Based on unrounded figures.

³Includes 50,000 persons whose age was not reported.

⁴Includes 93,000 persons whose age was not reported.