

PUBLIC HEALTH

# Lives To Be Saved, Suffering Reduced By 10-Year Program

## Five-Point Plan Offered to Expand Public Health Services and Provide for Medical Care for Needy

**A** TREMENDOUS life-saving plan was presented to the National Health Conference at Washington.

This plan is the program for providing adequate medical and health care to the entire population drawn up by the Technical Committee on Medical Care of the Interdepartmental Committee to Coordinate Health and Welfare Activities. Members of the Technical Committee are: Chairman, Miss Martha M. Eliot of the U. S. Children's Bureau; Dr. I. S. Falk of the Social Security Board; Dr. Joseph W. Mountin, George St. J. Perrott and Dr. Clifford E. Waller of the U. S. Public Health Service.

"A major reduction in needless loss of life and suffering, an increasing prospect for longer years of productive, self-supporting life in our population" will be achieved by this plan within a decade, the Technical Committee is convinced.

The maximum cost to Federal, State and local governments of the first three features of the five-point plan is estimated at \$850,000,000 every year for 10 years. The committee believes it will take 10 years of gradual expansion of medical and health services for the plan to become fully effective.

### Five Points

First recommendation of the Technical Committee is to expand general public health services with the hope of eradicating tuberculosis, venereal diseases and malaria, controlling deaths from pneumonia and cancer, and fighting mental diseases and industrial diseases more effectively. This part of the program is expected to cost \$200,000,000 annually, half of this to be borne by the Federal government. Along with this expansion of public health services, the committee recommends expanding maternal and child health services, with the object of making "available to all mothers and children of all income groups and in all parts of the United States minimum medical services essential for the reduction of our needlessly high maternal mortality rates and death

rates among newborn infants, and for the prevention in childhood of diseases and conditions leading to serious disabilities in later years." Annual cost: \$165,000,000.

Second point in the committee's plan provides for 360,000 hospital beds, in addition to those already in existence, in general, tuberculosis, and mental hospitals and in rural and urban areas, and for the construction of 500 health and diagnostic centers in areas inaccessible to hospitals. These new hospitals and clinics would require financial assistance for the first three years of operation. Averaged over a ten-year period, the total annual cost is estimated at \$146,050,000, half of this to come from Federal funds.

Third point in the plan is for providing medical care to the medically needy. Starting with \$50,000,000 the first year, this part of the program, it is suggested, should be gradually expanded till it reaches the estimated level of \$400,000,000 which would be needed

to provide minimum care to the medically needy groups. The Federal government to meet one-half the annual costs.

Fourth point in the plan is for reducing the burdens of sickness among self-supporting persons. It is suggested that this can be done "without great increase in total national expenditures" by devices for distributing these costs among groups of people over periods of time. Suggested method of financing would be either by general taxation or special tax assessments, or specific insurance contributions from potential beneficiaries, or both. No estimate of costs of this has yet been given by the Technical Committee. The role of the Federal government, the committee states "should be principally that of giving financial and technical aid to the States" for developing sound programs of their own choice.

Fifth and final point of the life-saving plan recommends providing insurance against the loss of wages during sickness. Details and costs of this part of the plan have not yet been announced.

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## Startling Remarks Made At National Health Meet

**"M**ILLIONS of citizens lack the individual means to pay for adequate medical care"—President Roosevelt's message to the conference.

"On an average day, 4,000,000 or



**ICE-WALLED SPRING BELOW MULDROW GLACIER**

*Discharging most of the melt water of Muldrow Glacier, in Mt. McKinley National Park, last spring, the source of the Kantishna River, built up a wall several feet high and about 50 feet across around its orifice, as the waters froze in the chill Alaskan air. This photograph is the work of Park Superintendent Harry Liek.*