

## PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING *in* SYRACUSE

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THAT the success of a department of health in its effort to make life in a city more healthful depends in no small measure upon the strength of its public health nursing service, seems to have been thoroughly demonstrated in Syracuse—at least to the point where it has been recognized in making up the City's health budget for 1925. Demonstration funds have made it possible to add various activities to the existing machinery of the Syracuse Department of Health.

But, of those services recently presented to Health Commissioner Thomas P. Farmer, M. D. and other officials of the City administration, public health nursing was chosen for adoption and incorporation into the routine of the Department's work at this time.

The budget for 1925 just adopted by the City Council of Syracuse provides for the payment, effective March first, of the salaries of six nurses employed in various bureaus of the Health Department, who have been paid hitherto from demonstration funds. The budget also makes provision for an X-ray operator, thus relieving the demonstration budget of this item of expense.

In a somewhat similar manner, the Board of Education has made provision to take over two of the six public school nurses provided from demonstration funds. Once incorporated in the personal service activities of the Board of Education, this increased nursing service will undoubtedly continue there.

These appropriations mark a recognition on the part of the City's budget makers of the value of the services developed

as a result of the urban health demonstration in Syracuse.

Upon the interest, co-operation and participation of local authorities and voluntary agencies, the success of the demonstration depends. The work is undertaken largely to determine the most effective ways and means of advancing disease prevention and health conservation in Syracuse. It is hoped that once the value of other added measures for disease prevention and health conservation have been demonstrated to the public, they will be adopted and incorporated into the routine of existing local health agencies, public or private, and thus placed under complete local support and control.

The nurse, as a public health agent, is not new in Syracuse. For years, the Department of Health and such private agencies as the Visiting Nurse Association and the Child Health Committee have employed nurses in various phases of their work.

At present, the City employs a total of twenty-two public health nurses, exclusive of those added to the public payroll on March first. Twelve of these are engaged in school hygiene work under the Board of Education and ten are helping to carry on the various health activities (exclusive of the hospital and dispensary services) under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health. This represents an average of one nurse to approximately 8,500 population in the City.

To the City's nursing corps of twenty-eight (effective March first), may be added twenty-six public health nurses whose services are provided with funds from private sources. Fourteen are employed by the Visiting Nurse Association and eight from demonstration funds supplied by the Milbank Memorial Fund. Four are employed by the Child Health Committee. This brings the total of all public health nurses in Syracuse to fifty-four—or one nurse for approximately 3,500 population.

According to the standard determined by the Committee on Municipal Health Department Practice of the American Public Health Association, a city the size of Syracuse should have one nurse for each 2,000 population. This means that since approximately half of the nurses now engaged in public health nursing in Syracuse are provided by private agencies, the City itself will have to make further increases in its nursing staffs in the future in order to come up to this standard, which is considered conservative. The additions provided in the 1925 health budget, however, represent a commendable beginning on the part of the public authorities in having the City meet this responsibility.

Formerly, the time of a given nurse or group of nurses was devoted exclusively to one special field such as child welfare, school hygiene or tuberculosis. This meant that in following up cases the nurse would have to travel long distances back and forth across the City. Not only did this involve a loss of time, but often two or more nurses would be visiting the same home.

Under the new plan, a nurse will be assigned to a smaller district, where under supervision she will look after all of the various interests of the Department of Health there, thus eliminating duplication and increasing the number of possible visits in a given day.

Miss Agnes J. Martin, former Superintendent of the nurses' division of the Health Department of Milwaukee, has been appointed Director of the Syracuse Health Department's nursing service. Headquarters for the service, secured from demonstration funds, will be at 314 East Fayette Street. Provision is made here for desk space for each nurse. Offering a common meeting place, this office will serve to correlate the work of nurses engaged in various phases of the City's health activity, including child welfare and school hygiene. It will

also serve as a meeting place for the Child Health Committee of the Associated Charities and for other kindred groups. Several meetings for midwives in the City have been held here, and the inspection of midwives in the City by officials of the State Health Department was recently made at this headquarters.

For these tangible evidences of its recognition of the work performed by the public health nurse, the City of Syracuse is to be commended. The additions to its staff will enable the Department of Health to raise the standard of the nursing service under public support. Moreover, the generalized plan, which has been tried out and is fully endorsed by health authorities elsewhere, should greatly expedite the work of the City's nursing service.

For the after-care of infantile paralysis patients, four clinics are now being held weekly at the Syracuse Free Dispensary. It is reported that there are 266 such patients in Syracuse who need after care.

In addition to the clinics, a hospital has been established in one of the suburbs of Syracuse for under-nourished and crippled children.

