

## IN THIS ISSUE

**R**ISING COSTS of medical care and a growing demand by the public for medical services have stimulated rapid increase in the use of insurance for prepayment of hospital and medical care and also have led to new approaches in the organization of medical practice in order to make the services of medical specialists and preventive services more available.

In 1947, a plan for prepayment of comprehensive medical services to be provided by private physicians organized on a group practice basis was instituted by the Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York (HIP). The experience of this voluntary, nonprofit insurance program is being studied to make available information on economic and administrative problems related to the provision of medical care and on the amount and kinds of services utilized by enrollees and their dependents.

In the first report, "Longitudinal Analyses of Four Years of Experience of a Prepaid Comprehensive Medical Care Plan," Paul M. Densen, Neva R. Deardorff, and Eve Balamuth have examined the enrollment experience and the relation of such factors as type of contract, sex, age, and number of dependents to continuance of enrollment.

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The relation of socio-economic status to frequency of medically attended illness is reported by Katherine B. Laughton, Carol W. Buck, and G. E. Hobbs in the paper entitled "Socio-Economic Status and Illness." For individuals in 105 families enrolled in a prepaid medical care plan in Essex County, Ontario, Canada, records of physicians' services during a two-

year period were tabulated. Classification of socio-economic status is in terms of median rental for the area in which a family resided. For this group of families, illness among infants showed a significant inverse association with socio-economic status and chronic illness increased with decreasing status but the differences were not statistically significant. For total illness, the differences among groups were small and not significant.

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In 1639, only nineteen years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, the Massachusetts Bay Colony enacted a law requiring the registration of births and deaths in that area. The history of vital registration in Massachusetts from this early date to comparatively recent times has been traced by Dr. Robert Gutman. The first article deals with the colonial period and it appears in this issue under the title "Birth and Death Registration in Massachusetts. I. The Colonial Background." The short series of articles on this subject will be continued in later issues.

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In an article "Child Spacing as Measured from the Ages of Children in the Household" Joseph Schachter and Wilson H. Grabill describe an experimental attempt at deriving intervals between births from cross-sectional Census data on age. They apply the method to 1950 Census data and to the April 1954 Current Population Survey materials and present some of the results. The authors emphasize the limitations of the method but they believe that it has worthy potentialities and that it merits further study and development.