WPA REVIEWS CHILD HEALTH AID

Millions of children have been direct beneficiaries of the health projects of the Works Progress Administration, according to a report released today by Administrator Harry L. Hopkins.

More than 9,000,000 visits, examinations or treatments, given by WPA nurses to millions of needy persons, a large percentage of whom are children, were cited in the report.

Other outstanding activities included visits to more than 400,000 families by WPA housekeeping aides who care for children in the homes and approximately 80,000,000 hot school lunches served to pupils by WPA workers.

The report was submitted by Ellen S. Woodward, Assistant WPA Administrator in charge of the Division of Women's and Professional Projects, including the health program, pursuant to the proclamation by President Roosevelt designating May 1 as National Child Health Day.

WPA health projects, Mrs. Woodward explained, stress the promotion and protection of child health, covering such activities as bedside nursing, various types of clinics, laboratory research, surveys, housekeeping aides and hot lunches for school children.

Bedside nursing projects are in operation in 37 of the 48 States; medical and dental projects in 22 States and New York City; housekeeping aides in 28 States; hot school lunches in 42 States, the District of Columbia and New York City.

Georgia has a State-wide nursing and public health program, 75 per cent of which is devoted to maternity and infant welfare work. These WPA nursing projects have given employment to many nurses who were forced out of their profession by economic conditions. Immunizations by WPA nurses totaled 491,500. General home nursing visits numbering 400,000 were made, teaching principles of home hygiene and child care; aiding doctors and dentists in the examination of school children; giving health supervision to prospective mothers and infants; supervising the work of mid-wives; giving instructions under the supervision of physicians; assisting in community clinics, and waging campaigns against tuberculosis, hookworm and other diseases. Thirty thousand infants and pre-school children were under the health supervision provided by WPA in Georgia.
referred 1,710 children for health examinations; 34,205 children had received nurs-
ing service at school; 4,629 children had been referred for tuberculosis examinations; and 10,214 children had been immunized against contagious diseases.

In Kansas bedside nursing projects are operating in 13 counties with 16 nurses employed. Illustrative of the amount of work accomplished for children throughout the country is the report of the Kansas nurses who, in the last six months of 1936, inspected 31,677 pre-school children, reporting to physicians all who needed medical attention; took care of 535 pre-natal cases; gave advice to 220 other expectant mothers; and gave more than 400 immunizations against smallpox, typhoid and diphtheria. As part of their regular work these Kansas nurses distribute pamphlets and other literature on everything having to do with the health of families, with special emphasis on pre-natal care to safeguard the health of mother and expected baby.

Negro nurses in Florida concentrate on the maternal and infant program. In November, 1936, one of the Negro nurses was caring for 69 pre-natal cases. A majority of these expectant mothers had made no plans for the care of the coming baby and had never known what it was to have a nurse in their home. They are said to respond readily to the advice given by a woman of their own race as soon as they realize that she knows her work. The colored State midwife follows up the work done by the nurses in the homes of the patients, and gives instructions in the care of the mother and baby.

A cardiac hospital, sponsored by the Division of Public Health, is maintained at the Lymanhurst Health Centre in Minnesota where underprivileged children suffering from incipient heart disease are given special treatment. The hospital, which has the only WPA laboratory of its kind in the United States, accommodates 40 patients at a time. Every bed is usually occupied. The children, ranging in years from four to fourteen, come from relief homes. All have rheumatic heart trouble which, if not properly treated and taken in time results in permanent dam-
age. The patients are cared for until all signs of the disease have disappeared—usually about three months. It is estimated that approximately a thousand children in the Minneapolis schools are heart cases. It is the aim of the WPA Public Health workers in that city to reach and save these children before the disease has advanced beyond checking. The WPA nursing project is state-wide in Minnesota. Wherever the project is set up a county advisory nursing committee and a registered nurse preferably a public health nurse, give local supervision. All the nursing personnel must be approved by this local committee and by the State Division of Child Hygiene.

Nurses on WPA projects have given, and continue to give, in almost all States inoculations against scarlet fever, diphtheria, influenza, and typhoid, as well as vaccinations against smallpox, sprays against poliomyelitis and inoculations
against whooping cough.

In some of the States WPA nurses and clinical assistants have been caring for whooping cough patients, making tests, tabulating results and keeping continuous records in the interest of scientific accuracy. The objective is not only to safeguard the health and lives of the immediate patients, but to discover a method whereby whooping cough may be recognized more readily than formerly; to determine the stage of the disease at which danger of contagion ceases, and to work out the most effective means of immunization.

On a project at Louisville, Kentucky, as many as 250 slides for whooping cough tests sometimes come in from one county in a single week. These slides are examined, classified, and reported back to the county authority. In case of high frequency, eradication measures are inaugurated by the State Health Department.

As a result of a drive made possible in Charleston, S.C., by Federal assistance, diphtheria has been reduced to a minimum. In a twelve-month period, graduate nurses visited 27,408 homes to persuade parents to protect their children from diphtheria by toxoid immunization. WPA nurses are at this time following up the gains made in that original drive.

A WPA health unit in Ohio assisted in tracing down 1,140 victims of infantile paralysis, and succeeded in interesting the parents in 713 cases in the latest information regarding treatment of the disease. It is now estimated that 60 per cent of the pre-school children in the cities of Cuyahoga County, Ohio, have been immunized against diphtheria, as compared with about 40 per cent in 1934.

In New York State, WPA nurses make an average of 400,000 home visits a month; 5,000 monthly visits to promote and conduct immunization campaigns and surveys to reduce malnutrition, not to mention innumerable visits to hospitals, dentists, and doctors. Special attention is given to diets for children, and to the care of expectant mothers.

Clinical work as a part of the WPA Health Program lays emphasis on the care and safeguarding of children's health. Children, and their parents are given instruction in the care of their teeth and gums. In New Orleans the Dental Clinic is one of the most valued of all WPA health projects.

In New York City 213 dentists, hygienists and administrative workers assigned to one project are conducting their clinical and educational work in 105 clinics distributed throughout the city. In the month ending January 20, 1937, 28,900 school children had their teeth examined, and nearly 30,000 received professional instructions. Dental clinics wherever established give particular attention to the teeth of school children.

In New York City, safeguarding children's health under the WPA program includes a Bureau of Infantile Hygiene, with WPA medical inspectors assigned...
to baby health and pre-school conferences for the examination of children. A boy of nine who had never had any teeth was fitted with dental plates by WPA dentists and saved from a lifetime of disfigurement. Operating in 106 clinics in every section of the city, the 176 dentists of the unit have treated more than 386,000 children since the inception of the project in August, 1935.

In Chicago, the children in 254 of the city's 336 elementary schools have had their eyes tested. Several thousand have had treatments resulting in cures, or decided improvement. The eye testing is done by WPA women workers, many of whom were trained nurses, and all specially trained for this work.

The report also cites concentrated efforts made by WPA workers under the direction of the State Health Department of Alabama in the infantile paralysis epidemic in that State last summer. Sixty more trained nurses were requisitioned to assist county health officers in administering the nasal preventive spray and instructing people in its use. In some instances these WPA nurses took charge of cases where the disease had already begun its inroads. Within a few days after the outbreak of the epidemic the spray was available to virtually everyone, especially to all children. Ten counties in the State had no health officers and two WPA nurses, fully trained to take charge of the immunization of people old and young, were sent to each of these counties.

The epidemic was over by the end of September, leaving more than three hundred children seemingly paralyzed for life. The after-treatment given by WPA nurses has greatly reduced the number of those who seemed to be permanently paralyzed. The WPA is also carrying out further experiments with the newly developed poliomyelitis spray as a preventive.

In addition to Alabama, WPA is doing anti-polio work in Arizona, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, and Virginia. In Ohio a survey revealed 1,140 victims of infantile paralysis. The WPA workers succeeded in getting the parents of 713 of these children interested. States in which therapeutic pools for the treatment of infantile paralysis cases are in operation under the direction of WPA include Arizona, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island. Two such pools are now under construction in New Jersey. Paralyzed limbs that can not be moved except under water get the exercise so necessary to a cure in these therapeutic pools.

A WPA health project operating in the District of Columbia gives special attention to the care of children and to maternity cases. The Crippled Survey for the District has served more than 2,000 children.

A WPA nurse in one county of Wyoming has been able to establish an annual tonsil clinic. Any child in the county whose family is unable to employ a private
A diphtheria immunization campaign will be based entirely upon information resulting from a survey made by 24 WPA workers in Colorado among school children and a study of the morbidity and mortality rates of communicable diseases.

"School children like Armies, march on their stomachs," wrote a schoolboy in Kitsap County, Washington. He went on to say that the hot lunches his class had been having had made it possible for them to "do their arithmetic" which they had never been able to do before.

In Boise, Idaho, noon lunches are served to 15,000 hungry boys and girls every day in the grade schools.

In Craven County, North Carolina, a lunch consisting of soup—vegetable or bean—sandwiches, stewed fruit and cocoa is served to thousands of children. Since this hot lunch program started the improvement in health and in the quality of work done by previously undernourished children has been remarkable.

School lunches in Fresno, California, and in Omaha, Nebraska, have had high commendation by the press and by city officials.

In Dunklin County, Missouri, the Superintendent of Public Schools has expressed his appreciation for the hot lunches served at the schools of his county. Many of the children, if it had not been for these WPA hot lunches, would have had no lunch at all. The foods used in Missouri, and wherever this hot lunch program is under way, are simple, but include all the necessary vitamins.

Undernourished children in New Mexico schools have greatly improved in health and conduct since the hot lunch program started. In South Dakota, the demand for hot school lunches has come from all over the State.

Vermont has reported that in one school where thirty of the fifty children were under weight, a weight-gaining contest between boys and girls resulted in a 6.9 per cent weight increase in four weeks. One child gained seven pounds. The gain in weight, and the general improvement in the health of these Vermont children, were due not only to the hot lunches served at school, but also to the better planned meals at home, which were the result of good work done by the WPA nutrition expert, who helped mothers to budget their food allowance and plan the daily meals.

WPA housekeeping aides are of incalculable help to the health program in caring for children in motherless homes, or homes where the usual housekeeper and cook is disabled.
A semi-paralyzed woman in Arizona, trying to care for two babies with only one hand, was forced to let both home and children get into a pitiable state of neglect. A housekeeping aide has brought order to the home, cleanliness, care and health to the two small children.

In Massachusetts, a housekeeping aide from a WPA project follows up the work of the WPA nurse, and makes the proper dieting and care of the children her especial concern in all the homes she visits.

Doctors in Connecticut are availing themselves of the services of housekeeping aides in homes where the mother has several children and can not properly care for the children and do her housework. The aide takes care of the children, looking after their diet, cleanliness and clothing, thus helping to safeguard their health.

Arkansas, Texas, Tennessee, Nevada, Michigan, Montana, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island are among the 28 States in which successful results in the care of children are being realized under housekeeping aide projects.

Virginia has 361 registered, graduate nurses on WPA projects caring for the general health of the poor, and giving special attention to maternity cases and the care of babies and young children.

Well baby clinics in various centers, under WPA nurses, contribute to the health of infants. All told, on WPA nursing and clinical projects, some 16,000 workers throughout the United States are looking after the underprivileged sick and safeguarding the health of the children of this nation. This does not take into account the WPA technical and clerical workers who are aiding in the general public health program, which emphasizes the health and safety of the children.