

CHAPTER 23

Clinics and Other Outpatient Facilities*

A. NATURE AND COMPOSITION

1. DESCRIPTION OF FACILITIES

Within a relatively short span of years, facilities for outpatient care have expanded substantially in number and volume of services provided. Diagnostic and therapeutic services are being provided in a variety of facilities, including hospital outpatient departments, diagnostic and treatment centers, public health centers, and rehabilitation facilities.

(a) *Physical Characteristics*

Outpatient facilities in the United States can be grouped into the following major categories:

Hospital outpatient departments including scheduled clinics and emergency care services.

Hospital adjunct services including laboratory; radiological services (diagnostic and therapeutic); pharmacy; poison center; and rehabilitative services (physical and occupational therapy).

Free standing specialized facilities operated by governmental and voluntary agencies and those operated by private practitioners, either individually or in group practice.

Hospital outpatient departments are defined by the U.S. Public Health Service as: "That section of the hospital with allotted physical facilities, regularly scheduled hours, and personnel in sufficient numbers assigned for established hours, to provide for care of patients who are not registered as inpatients while receiving physician, dentist, or allied services."¹

Physical features commonly found in the outpatient department of a short-term, general, community hospital can be grouped into the following general areas for service to the public concerned:

Public facilities.—Parking areas; entrances from the street and the hospital lobby; separate lobby with reception, information, and appointment desks; seating for persons waiting for services; toilets; drinking fountains; and public telephones.

Administrative offices.—Office spaces for executive and secretarial personnel; admitting procedures; business office; cashier's desk; medical records file room; rooms for maintenance and housekeeping services; and storage of supplies.

* Prepared by the Division of Hospital and Medical Facilities, Public Health Service, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, with minor editing by Committee staff.

¹ U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Service, Division of Hospital and Medical Facilities. *Facts and Trends on Hospital Outpatient Services*. PHS Publication No. 930-C-6, June 1964.