

BUREAU OF MEDICAL SERVICES—DIVISION OF HOSPITALS: MEDICAL
CARE FOR FEDERAL BENEFICIARIES

PART I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

1. *Objectives*

(a) Provide health services for persons designated by Congress as Public Health Service beneficiaries; e.g., American seamen, uniformed services personnel and their dependents, narcotic addicts, persons afflicted with leprosy, and others.

(b) Conduct programs of training and research aimed toward improved resources for preserving and protecting health;

(c) Consult with other Federal agencies on employee health activities; and under contract, establish and operate Federal employee health programs for other Federal agencies.

2. *Operation*

Operates primarily on the basis of appropriated funds which are augmented by reimbursements from other Federal agencies and other nonbeneficiaries for services rendered under law and regulation; provides direct medical services through a system of general-medical-surgical (11), narcotic addiction (2), leprosy (1), and Public Health Service hospitals; outpatient clinics (27); and private physicians (205), under contract on a fee-for-services basis; also makes payments to the State of Hawaii for the care and treatment of persons afflicted with leprosy.

3. *History*

Medical care to American seamen was initiated through legislation signed by President John Adams entitled "An Act for the relief of sick and disabled seamen," on July 16, 1798. Initially, the program was supported by assessments against the pay of seamen. In 1884, a tonnage tax replaced the hospital tax and in 1905, the tonnage tax was rescinded and the program financed henceforth entirely by congressional appropriations.

Since the inception of the program numerous other categories of Federal beneficiaries were added to the original seaman group.

HISTORY OF THE DIVISION OF HOSPITALS

LIST OF BENEFICIARIES

- 1798: American seamen—for medical care.
- 1802: Foreign seamen—for medical care (on pay basis).
- 1894: Revenue cutter service and lifesaving service (Now U.S. Coast Guard)—for medical care.
- 1906: Federal employees suspected of having tuberculosis—for medical examination.
- 1911: Special study patients—for medical care.
- 1913: Field personnel of the Public Health Service injured or taken ill in line of duty—for medical care.
- Commissioned officers of the Public Health Service—for medical care.
- 1915: Seamen applying for certificates and licenses—for physical examination and instruction in first aid.
- 1916: Federal employees (beneficiaries of the Employees' Compensation Commission) injured or taken ill in line of duty—for medical care.
- Lighthouse keepers and assistant lightkeepers—for medical care.
- 1917: Hansen's disease patients—for medical care.
- Arriving aliens—for medical examinations.
- Beneficiaries of War Risk Insurance Bureau (now Veterans' Administration)—for medical care (on pay basis).