

retarded, for the child requiring emergency shelter, and for the child in the urban slum.

I recommend legislation to authorize a program of project grants to encourage States and local communities to develop new forms of child services.

CHILD HEALTH

Last year nearly 400,000 needy mothers received care through maternal and child health nursing services. About 3 million children received public health nursing services, including almost 20 percent of all infants under 1 year of age.

But our public health record for children gives us little cause for complacency:

At least 10 other nations have lower infant mortality rates than the United States. Nearly 40,000 babies in America die each year who would be saved if our infant mortality rate were as low as Sweden's.

Nearly 1 million pregnant women receive little or no prenatal care.

More than 3.5 million poor children under 5 who need medical help do not receive it under public medical care programs.

Our whole society pays a toll for the unhealthy and crippled children who go without medical care: a toll of incalculable human suffering, unemployment, rising rates of disabling disease, and expenditures for special education and institutions for the handicapped.

We have made hopeful beginnings toward reducing that toll.

Under the "medicaid" program enacted in 1965, the 25 States now in partnership with the Federal Government will help pay hospital costs and doctors' bills for more than 3.5 million poor children this year. By next year, we expect 23 more States to join "medicaid."

I am requesting increased funds for the "medicaid" program, including \$221 million for medical care for needy children—an increase of some \$100 million over last year.

We must also move in another direction. Nearly 500,000 youngsters now receive treatment under the crippled children's program. But more than twice that number need help.

The problem is to discover, as early as possible, the ills that handicap our children. There must be a continuing followup and treatment so that handicaps do not go neglected.

We must enlarge our efforts to give proper eye care to a needy child. We must provide help to straighten a poor youngster's crippled limb before he becomes permanently disabled. We must stop tuberculosis in its first stages, before it causes serious harm.

I recommend legislation to expand the timely examination and treatment of an additional 500,000 poor children in fiscal 1968.

In 1965 I proposed and the Congress enacted a special program to provide comprehensive health care for the poor child. Today, through the work of the Children's Bureau and local public health agencies, thousands of preschool and school children in more than 20 communities across America are being examined and treated. The early success of this program justifies its further expansion.

I am requesting the full authorization of \$40 million for the comprehensive health service program for preschool and school children.