



CITY OF BALTIMORE

---

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

1944



*To the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the  
Year Ended December 31, 1944*

*There is no more important function of  
government than the protection of the public health.*

Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin  
at the Annual Meeting of the  
Maryland Cooperative Milk Producers, Inc.



## *A First Rule of Hygiene*



*Photograph By Professor M. W. Jennison  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

COVER UP EACH COUGH AND SNEEZE  
OTHERWISE YOU SPREAD DISEASE

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c = child hygiene, ea = ear clinic, h o = health officer for communicable disease control and school hygiene, m = maternity hygiene, m i = medical investigator, s = Sydenham Hospital, t = tuberculosis clinic, v = venereal disease clinic, **bold type** = full time.

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ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH ANNUAL  
REPORT OF THE BALTIMORE CITY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1944

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

*The Honorable,*

THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE

GENTLEMEN:

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 91 of the City Charter and also in accordance with a resolution adopted by the City Council in the year 1817, I have the honor to transmit to you a summary of the one hundred and thirtieth in a series of consecutive annual reports of the work done by the Baltimore City Health Department, and by the several bureaus thereof, for the year ended December 31, 1944.

**Introduction**

The third year of the war was a relatively healthful one for the city, although the summer months saw the highest prevalence of poliomyelitis since 1916, diphtheria was more in evidence than during recent years, and there were 6 rabid dogs found in the city. On the other hand, typhoid fever again reached a new low record of only 15 cases for the entire year.

The city paid special attention to improving its venereal disease control services. On D-Day, June 6, Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin participated in the dedication ceremonies of the new Somerset Health Center at Central Avenue and Orleans Street. This houses an active venereal disease clinic which was formerly located at 419 North Bond Street. The Health Center was made possible through the cooperation of the City Housing Authority. In September a penicillin clinic was also opened for the care of sulfa-resistant cases of gonorrhea.

In April the Board of Estimates created in the City Welfare Department a new position of Assistant Director of Welfare for Medical Care, and a qualified physician was sought for this important post who will be designated, for liaison purposes, as Deputy Commissioner of Health in the City Health Department. The plan had received the prior endorsement of the Consultants to the Health Department and of the Council of the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland. Likewise important was the announcement in August of a new committee to study the medical care

needs of Baltimore City under the auspices of the State Planning Commission. Dr. Lowell J. Reed, Dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, was selected to serve as chairman of this committee.

The Mayor in October appointed a committee of city officials to study the various phases of the housing problem and methods for coordinating the efforts of city agencies and nonofficial groups. The members were representatives of the City Housing Authority and the Commission on City Plan, and the City Solicitor, the Chief Engineer, the Director of Welfare and the Commissioner of Health. Beginning in October six meetings had been held by the close of the year. The Health Department added to its staff a new division chief for nutrition in the Bureau of Food Control. On October 21 the Commissioner of Health took the oath of office following reappointment for a term of six years in accordance with the provisions of the City Charter.

### The Health of the City

The estimated population of Baltimore City as of July 1, 1944 was 937,000. The estimated white population for the same date was 756,000; for the colored population the figure was 181,000 or 19.3 per cent of the total. The birth and death rates included in this report are based on these figures.

Decreases in the number of deaths from heart disease and pneumonia account in large measure for a lower death rate, 12.3 per 1,000 population in 1944 as compared with 13.5 for 1943. The low infant mortality rate of 40.7 per 1,000 live births also contributed to the favorable health record of Baltimore for the year. Only 15 cases of typhoid fever were reported during 1944, which established a new record for this disease. Carriers remain the principal source of typhoid fever in Baltimore.

Compared with these favorable aspects of Baltimore's health during 1944 the record for diphtheria was disappointing. A total of 226 cases and 13 deaths was recorded compared with 106 cases and 3 deaths in 1943. A large proportion of the cases and deaths occurred in a localized outbreak in the southeastern section of the city. An extensive campaign to give all children the protective diphtheria toxoid was carried on in this and other areas during the late spring months.

In the first five months of 1944 measles occurred widely throughout the city. There were 10,324 cases of the disease reported for the entire year. The peak of the outbreak occurred in March when 3,885 cases were reported. There were 10 fatal cases, 7 of which were in children under three years of age.

*Poliomyelitis, Meningococcus Meningitis and Rheumatic Fever*

During the summer months Baltimore as well as many other communities in the eastern part of the United States had the most extensive outbreak of poliomyelitis since the epidemic of 1916. There were 167 paralytic cases of the disease in Baltimore with 12 deaths. During 1943 there had been only 8 non-fatal cases. Because of improvements in treatment during and after the acute stage of the disease the number of crippled children from the 1944 outbreak will be smaller than would formerly have been expected.

There were less than half the number of cases of meningococcus meningitis reported in the city during 1944 compared with 1943. In that year there were 389 cases and 63 deaths of this disease while during 1944 the number decreased to 177 cases with 33 deaths. The occurrence of the disease has apparently been associated with the migration of war workers to Baltimore and resulting overcrowding due to inadequate housing facilities. Under a State regulation adopted in 1943 a total of 169 cases of rheumatic fever and 115 cases of acute rheumatic heart disease were reported in Baltimore during 1944.

*Births, Maternal Mortality and Infant Mortality*

For the first year since 1939 the number of births in Baltimore in 1944 showed a decrease compared with the number reported for the preceding year. There were 18,830 babies born to Baltimore mothers during 1944 as compared with 21,054 in 1943. The number of white births was 14,021 as compared with 16,077 in 1943, and the number of births in the Negro race was 4,809 in 1944 as against 4,977 in 1943.

Although the number of resident births decreased in 1944 as compared with 1943 the number of mothers who died from causes associated with pregnancy and childbirth increased from 34 in 1943 to 40 in 1944. This increase meant a rise in the maternal death rate from 1.6 per 1,000 live births in 1943 to 2.1 per 1,000 live births in 1944.

The infant mortality rate dropped from 46.2 in 1943 to 40.7 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 1944. This death rate for white infants in 1944 was 34.1 and for colored infants 59.9. The 1944 white infant mortality rate was lower than for any year in the City's history except for 1939 and the Negro infant mortality rate was lower than ever before except for the year 1942.

*Principal Causes of Death*

The degenerative diseases of old age, such as heart disease, nephritis and cerebral hemorrhage, and cancer continued to rank high among the causes of death. The rates for the seven leading causes of death in

1944 for the total population and for the white and colored populations are shown in the accompanying table, where it will be seen that there was a decrease in every item as compared with 1943 with the exception of tuberculosis and cancer among Negroes.

RESIDENT DEATH RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION FOR THE SEVEN LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH; TOTAL, WHITE AND COLORED POPULATION: BALTIMORE 1943-1944

TOTAL POPULATION			WHITE POPULATION			COLORED POPULATION		
CAUSE	Death Rate per 100,000		CAUSE	Death Rate per 100,000		CAUSE	Death Rate per 100,000	
	1944	1943		1944	1943		1944	1943
Diseases of heart.....	387.7	426.2	Diseases of heart.....	402.1	434.6	Diseases of heart.....	327.6	391.8
Cancer, all forms.....	147.3	149.8	Cancer, all forms.....	152.9	159.0	Tuberculosis, all forms	239.8	221.4
Nephritis.....	104.8	113.3	Nephritis.....	87.7	95.3	Nephritis.....	176.2	187.4
Cerebral hemorrhage....	87.2	95.1	Cerebral hemorrhage....	79.6	87.7	Pneumonia.....	151.9	187.4
Tuberculosis, all forms..	85.5	86.6	Accidental causes.....	64.4	70.1	Cancer, all forms.....	123.7	112.1
Accidental causes.....	68.1	75.5	Tuberculosis, all forms	48.5	53.7	Cerebral hemorrhage..	118.8	125.3
Pneumonia.....	65.8	89.7	Pneumonia.....	45.2	65.9	Accidental causes.....	83.4	97.2

At the close of the report will be found certain selected tables that contain other important data on the vital statistics of the city for 1944.

### Administration

There follows a financial statement for the Health Department for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1944.

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

As of December 31, 1944

Total City Appropriations.....	\$1,142,658.91
Total City Expenditures.....	1,116,640.03
Appropriations by Ordinance of Estimates January 1, 1944.....	\$1,093,339.50
Appropriations for Transportation....	31,394.47
Supplementary Appropriations for Sydenham Hospital, Health Districts, Clinics and Special Projects...	17,924.94
	<u>\$1,142,658.91</u>

#### *Expenditures of the Baltimore City Health Department\**

##### ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION

Administration.....	\$27,838.56
Vital Statistics.....	39,073.17
Health Information.....	13,060.74
Laboratories.....	84,137.10
Eastern Health District.....	47,831.34
Western Health District.....	37,228.09
Druid Health Center.....	52,410.69
Southeastern Health District.....	<u>39,252.38</u>

\$340,832.07

\* See footnote on page 13.

MEDICAL SECTION

Communicable Diseases.....	23,426.17	
Tuberculosis.....	27,545.12	
Venereal Diseases.....	75,861.03	
Occupational Diseases.....	6,526.06	
Child Hygiene.....	47,785.92	
School Hygiene.....	11,374.07	
Public Health Nursing.....	<u>142,602.25</u>	
		\$335,120.62

SANITARY SECTION

Supervision.....	12,230.39	
Milk Control.....	41,428.24	
Food Control.....	22,910.99	
Environmental Hygiene.....	67,679.52	
Meat Inspection.....	<u>59,608.32</u>	
		\$203,857.46
Morgue and Public Cemetery.....		5,621.22
Sydenham Hospital.....		<u>231,208.66</u>
Total, Salaries and Expenses.....		\$1,116,640.03

*Receipts*

Health Revenue.....	\$ 436.00
Vital Statistics.....	24,842.39
Child Hygiene.....	336.00
Milk Control.....	10,362.00
Plumbing Permits.....	8,302.00
Rooming House Licenses.....	1,202.00
Meat Inspection.....	19,657.00
Sydenham Hospital.....	<u>10,359.97</u>
Total.....	\$75,497.36

*\*Additional Non-Health Department Health Expenditures*

There follow certain tabulations made of expenditures for health work in Baltimore in 1944 which were closely related to the work of the City Health Department:

I OFFICIAL EXPENDITURES

City Department of Education—high school medical services....	\$44,461.22
City Department of Welfare—city tuberculosis hospital.....	106,377.75
State Tuberculosis Hospitals—Baltimore City cases.....	488,424.74
State Health Department—city venereal disease control.....	3,775.00
The Johns Hopkins Hospital, venereal disease control.....	13,000.00
Federal Social Security funds—city health work.....	19,368.18
The Johns Hopkins Hospital, venereal disease control.....	<u>23,100.00</u>
	\$ 788,506.89

II NONOFFICIAL EXPENDITURES

Babies Milk Fund Association.....	\$34,162.07
Eudowood Tuberculosis Hospital—city cases.....	17,132.15
Instructive Visiting Nurse Association.....	75,900.95
Johns Hopkins University—Eastern Health District.....	22,835.00
Laboratory services—hospital or private.....	50,000.00†
Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness.....	6,343.00
Maryland Tuberculosis Association.....	48,038.00
Mount Pleasant Tuberculosis Hospital—city cases.....	68,947.00
Pasteurization plants—farm and laboratory control.....	35,000.00
Venereal disease control—hospital dispensaries.....	<u>90,000.00†</u>

\$ 448,358.17

TOTAL..... \$1,236,865.06

This \$1,236,865.06 added to the City Health Department expenditures of \$1,116,640.03 gives a grand total of \$2,353,505.09.

† Approximate figure.

*Personnel*

Dr. William K. Skilling, Director of the Bureau of Child Hygiene since 1934 died on November 20, 1944. Miss Ethel Northam was appointed Superintendent of Nurses at Sydenham Hospital on September 25 following the resignation of Mrs. Gwendolyn Betz. Charles E. Couchman, Chief of the Division of Industrial Hygiene reported for military duty on March 24 and Felix H. Pretsch was assigned to fill this vacancy on June 2. On October 30 Mrs. Florence J. Neely was appointed to the newly created position of Chief of the Division of Nutrition in the Bureau of Food Control.

**Vital Statistics**

On January 1, 1944 the Bureau of Vital Statistics became the Statistical Section and a Bureau of Vital Records and a Bureau of Biostatistics were created. This separation of the registration and statistical functions of vital statistics into two separate bureaus will permit a fuller development of both services.

The Statistical Section of the City Health Department has been called upon more and more during recent years for information and factual data related to vital statistics and population. Requests have come not only from the various bureaus of the Health Department but from many other agencies both official and nonofficial. Since the need for such data is often on a neighborhood basis the Statistical Section extended during the year the use of census tracts as the appropriate geographic unit for these community studies. In this connection a meeting of nineteen agencies interested in civic planning was held in the City Health Department in December and Miss Esther Wright from the Bureau of the Census was assigned to the Department to assist in the further development of census tract studies in Baltimore.

The Bureau of Vital Records registered 23,696 certificates of birth and 11,907 certificates of death during 1944. Requests for 24,575 birth transcripts and 23,676 death transcripts were cared for, together with 3,308 requests for verification of vital records by official agencies. The bureau filed 588 delayed records of birth, and reviewed evidence for additions or corrections of existing records which required a total of 5,497 personal interviews with applicants for these services.

The Bureau of Biostatistics prepared current analyses of births, deaths and cases of communicable diseases. Weekly summaries were submitted on the basis of which the Commissioner of Health wrote his "Saturday Letters to the Mayor." Compilations of home visits by public health nurses were made each month and population trends within the city were assembled in connection with the postwar school construction program.

### Health Information

*Baltimore Health News* was published each month for the twenty-first consecutive year and approximately eighty articles appeared covering such subjects as communicable diseases, laboratory research, venereal diseases, nutrition, tuberculosis, industrial hygiene, sex education, food control, housing, occupational diseases, medical care and vital statistics. A new feature inaugurated in 1944 was a series of front-page illustrated health maxims under the general title "First Rules of Hygiene." In January the earliest of these related to the control of communicable diseases. The picture appears on page 4 of this report and the jingle was "Cover up each cough and sneeze, otherwise you spread disease." In April the topic was prenatal care and in October it was "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." It is planned to issue a score of these in an illustrated health leaflet.

During 1944 other main health information activities included the following:

1. A health drama in the "Keeping Well" radio series was broadcast each week. Twenty-six scripts were selected and bound to comprise Volume V in the published "Keeping Well" radio drama series.
2. When 18 cases of diphtheria were reported during one week in April radio spot announcements, news releases, poster displays and exhibits were used in an educational campaign to inform the public of measures for the prevention of this disease.
3. A total of thirty-nine racks for the distribution of Health Department leaflet publications were in operation throughout the city. Six of these were newly set up during 1944.
4. As in previous years a monthly health information news article was sent to local neighborhood newspapers. The Baltimore Transit Company, the Inner Mission News and sixteen housing projects also cooperated in publishing these monthly releases and an estimated 200,000 additional readers were reached in 1944 as compared with 1943.
5. There were 516 health addresses given by staff members during the year. Specially planned meetings were conducted in cooperation with the Baltimore Housing Authority for groups living in four housing projects. Talks were also given and motion pictures shown for school, church and other groups and during the local observance of National Negro Health Week. There were 590 seminars and field demonstrations conducted by bureau directors for students of the professional schools in the city.



6. Radio broadcasts were presented, articles were published in the *Baltimore Health News* and news releases were issued in cooperation with nonofficial health agencies for the infantile paralysis fundraising campaign, Public Health Nursing Day, National Social Hygiene Day, Negro Health Week, Cancer Control Month, Child Health Day, the Clean City Campaign, National Hearing Week and the Annual Tuberculosis Seal Sale.
7. The Department purchased a 16 mm. sound film projector for use of the staff when giving lectures and health addresses.
8. The one hundred and twenty-ninth ANNUAL REPORT of the Health Department was edited and seen through the press.
9. Department staff members wrote 11 articles for professional journals and five reprints were mailed to the practicing physicians in the city. Five new publications were issued by the Department during the year.
10. The Department library was operated by the bureau, periodicals were bound and interlibrary loans made for staff personnel.
11. Work handled by the mailing and multigraph office included: Mailing of the monthly issues of *Baltimore Health News*, the weekly statistical reports, the 1943 issue of GUARDING THE HEALTH OF BALTIMORE and of the City Health Department ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1943, and the mimeographing of publications for the several bureaus of the Department, in addition to 100 volumes containing twenty-six "Keeping Well" radio dramas and 275 copies of the ninety-seven-page revision of the *Census Tract Location Index*.

### *Exhibits*

Fifty-seven exhibits were displayed in 1944 as compared with thirty-seven in 1943. New exhibit material completed during the year included: An easily portable, three-dimensional interior of a room designed to show effective rat proofing; two large three-dimensional posters in color, one entitled "Had Your Melcoms Today?" depicting the fundamentals of nutrition, the other "Children! Tell Your Parents Toxoid Prevents Diphtheria" planned primarily for use in schools; 550 silk-screen copies of the previously executed Health Department poster "Prevent Trichinosis" for distribution to local retail meat establishments and to others interested in the proper cooking of pork and pork products.

### Laboratories

The personnel situation in the Bureau of Laboratories improved during 1944 and the bureau was able to conduct established procedures, laboratory