

For Immediate Release

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The Fifth Annual Conference of the Iowa Public Health Association was held in Des Moines on April 3rd and 4th, 1930. Dr. D.C. Steelsmith, Deputy Commissioner, Iowa State Department of Health presented a paper: "What the Iowa County Health Law Can Accomplish". Dr. Steelsmith became Acting Commissioner 3 days later on the death of Dr. Henry Albert and after that was named Commissioner. Dr. Steelsmith had also been the first president of the Iowa Public Health Association. A news release with an abstract of Dr. Steelsmith's paper was issued on April 3rd. That released abstract is presented below.

"The chief reason for the lack of control of many communicable and other preventable diseases in Iowa is the lack of a proper organization of local public health work", said Dr. D.C. Steelsmith, Deputy Commissioner, Iowa State Department of Health, this afternoon at the Fifth Annual State Public Health Conference held in Des Moines under the auspices of the Iowa Public Health Association and the State Department of Health.

Heretofore local public health work could be administered only through small units: namely, cities, towns and townships. The 43rd General Assembly enacted the County Health Services law, which will permit Boards of Supervisors of any county to appropriate and expend money for the protection of the public health. It provides a legal method of cooperation between the county and any local board of health in carrying on the work and defraying the necessary expenses incurred.

Twelve Activities of Whole-Time County Health Units

1. Public Health Education.
2. Control of Communicable Diseases.
3. Organized prevention of nutritional and other preventable diseases.
4. Supervision of water supplies
5. Supervision of milk and food supplies.
6. Supervision of methods of sewage disposal.
7. Immunization campaigns against typhoid fever, smallpox and diphtheria.
8. Sanitary inspections.
9. Public Health Nursing.
10. Arrangements for physical examinations of school children and follow-up visits in the interest of having physical defects corrected.
11. Child (Public) Health.
12. Laboratory facilities for diagnosis

Twelve Advantages of a County Health Service Over Present Smaller Local Health Administration

1. Centralization of authority in one board instead of thirty-six, with the consequent elimination of conflicting authority between townships and villages.

2. Availability of expert professional personnel beyond the ability of a single township to finance, giving full-time service in all branches of public health administration.
3. More and better service for the same expenditure of money.
4. An organized unit for prevention of disease and a continuous program for the entire county with special emphasis on problems requiring community efforts.
5. An organized unit for the prevention and suppression of epidemics of disease.
6. An official central organization for the coordination of all health activities.
7. A marked reduction in the number of cases of illness, especially those due to communicable diseases.
8. The prevention of many premature deaths due to preventable and therefore unnecessary illness.
9. Giving to all persons in the county practically the same health protection. This is especially important for rural communities where, at the present time, but very little public health work is done.
10. Securing the correction of defects and other disease conditions for all children. This will be done in cooperation with Parent-Teacher, Farm Bureaus, and etc. organizations.
11. Reduction of poverty and the consequent need for supporting as many persons as are now supported from the poor fund. Authorities who have made a study of family social welfare are responsible for the statement that from 70 to 85% of all families they are called upon to assist, have become poor either directly or indirectly because of illness. There are but few County Boards of Supervisors in Iowa which are not sorely tried to avoid the overdrawing of their poor fund at the present time.
12. Improvement of the general health and well-being of the whole community.

To date one Iowa County has adopted the complete County Health unit idea. The Washington County Health Board began operation April 1st. Those interested in promoting a local public work on an efficient, whole-time county basis are urged to write to the State Department of Health, State House, Des Moines for a copy of the Iowa County Health Law.