

Health Care Systems: Government and Nonprofit Agencies

HEALTH CARE is a necessity. However, different organizations are needed to address specific areas of concern. No one organization can do it all or know everything. As a result, numerous organizations have been created throughout the years to protect people from the threat of pandemics, from medicine that may have harmful side effects, and from injuries that could be avoided with proper precautions. In this unit, you will learn about some of these organizations and the roles they play.



Objectives:



1. Identify government agencies providing health care services at the international, national, state, and local levels.
2. Identify nonprofit (volunteer) agencies providing health care services at the national, state, and local levels.

Key Terms:



Agency for Health Care Policy and Research
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
communicable
endowments
Food and Drug Administration
licensing
maternal
National Institutes of Health
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
World Health Organization

Health Care Services

Health care services are provided through for-profit agencies, nonprofit agencies, and governmental agencies. Governmental health care services are tax-supported, and many levels of government are involved in health care services. The levels of government involvement and oversight vary from international, national, and state to the local level.

INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

International agencies like the **World Health Organization** (WHO), sponsored by the United Nations, compile statistics and information on disease; publish health information; and investigate and address health problems throughout the world. Its vision is large and focused on the big picture.

NATIONAL AGENCIES

National agencies, such as the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (USDHHS), deal with health problems exclusively in the United States. Under the USDHHS, there are more area-specific agencies that address various national concerns.



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: Voluntary Health Care Services Organizations

The best way to learn about a particular health care service organization is to research it. Select an organization from the list below and visit its Web site. Investigate the mission and goals of the agency and assess how it is organized and funded. From the annual report:

- Identify the organization's total revenues.
- Identify two facts about the organization that others may not be aware of or that surprised you. Then, prepare your information in a PowerPoint presentation.

Organizations

- March of Dimes: <http://www.marchofdimes.com/>
- American Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org/>
- American Cancer Society: <http://www.cancer.org>
- American Heart Association: <http://www.americanheart.org>
- American Diabetes Association: <http://www.diabetes.org/home.jsp>
- Mental Health America: <http://www.nmha.org/>
- American Lung Association: <http://www.lungusa.org>
- Alzheimer's Association: <http://www.alz.org/>
- National Kidney Foundation: <http://www.kidney.org/>

National Institutes of Health

The **National Institutes of Health** (NIH) is an agency involved with research on diseases.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) is an agency concerned with the causes, spread, and control of diseases.

Food and Drug Administration

The **Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) is an agency responsible for regulating food and drug products sold to the public.

Agency for Health Care Policy and Research

Another national agency, the **Agency for Health Care Policy and Research** (AHCPR), researches the quality of health care delivery and identifies the standards of treatment to be provided by health care facilities.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

The **Occupational Safety and Health Administration** (OSHA) establishes and enforces standards that protect U.S. workers from job-related injuries and illnesses.

Veterans' Administration

The Veterans' Administration provides hospital and other health care to U.S. veterans who served in the armed forces.



FIGURE 1. Medical services can be received in a variety of locations.

STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

State and local agencies include county and city health departments that provide health education materials. The health departments are responsible for the purity of water and food; **communicable** (capable of passing directly or indirectly from one person or thing to another) disease control; alcohol and drug abuse control; **maternal** (relating to the mother) health; **licensing** (giving an agency or person permission to carry on certain activities and

stating what they may not do as well as what they are authorized to do) of various health agencies; immunization for disease control; inspection for environmental health and sanitation; collection of statistics and records related to health; and other community services.

State psychiatric hospitals serve the mentally ill. In contrast, county hospitals provide care for the ill and injured, especially for patients who require financial help to receive care.

Nonprofit (Volunteer) Agencies and Health Care Services

There are many national nonprofit health care agencies in the United States. Most state and local branches focus on one specific disease or group of diseases. Each organization typically studies the disease, provides funding to encourage research directed at curing or treating the disease, and promotes public education. These agencies operate with volunteer employees but also employ many full- and part-time health care workers. Nonprofit agency support is primarily from donations, gifts, membership fees, fundraisers, and **endowments** (gifts of property or money given to a group or organization). Some examples of national nonprofit health care agencies are:

- ◆ American Cancer Society
- ◆ American Heart Association
- ◆ American Lung Association
- ◆ American Diabetes Association
- ◆ National Association of Mental Health
- ◆ National Foundation of the March of Dimes
- ◆ American Red Cross
- ◆ Alzheimer's Association
- ◆ National Kidney Foundation



FIGURE 2. Funding is important to research development.

Summary:



Health care services are provided through for-profit agencies, nonprofit agencies, and governmental agencies. Governmental health care services are tax-supported. There are also many national nonprofit health care agencies in the United States that focus on one specific disease or group of diseases. Each organization typically studies the disease, provides funding to encourage research directed at curing or treating the disease, and promotes public education. These agencies operate with

volunteer employees but also employ many full- and part-time health care workers. Unlike government-funded organizations, nonprofit agency support is primarily from donations, gifts, membership fees, fundraisers, and endowments.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What is the international governmental health care services organization?
2. Name three national governmental health care services organizations.
3. Who researches and identifies the standards of treatment to be provided by health care facilities?
4. Who approves a medication before it can be found on the shelves at pharmacies nationwide?
5. Which agency is concerned about the spread of disease?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Select one local health care service organization. Research it. You may want to interview an employee of the organization. Then determine if it is an organization for which you want to volunteer.

Web Links:



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/about/organization/cio.htm>

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/about/en/>

National Institutes of Health

<http://www.nih.gov/>