

# Youth Camp Safety Study

A study of the health and safety in a representative sample of 11,000 youth camps in the United States is under way. The study is under the direction of the Bureau of Community Environmental Management, Health Services and Mental Health Administration.

The 1-year study was funded by the 92d Congress, which asked the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to make a full and complete investigation of youth camps to (a) determine the extent of preventable accidents and illnesses, (b) document the contribution toward safe operations being made by State and local public agencies and private organizations, and (c) examine existing State and local laws and the possible need for Federal laws in the field.

A series of bills to set youth camp safety standards had been introduced in each Congress since 1966, but none were passed. The authorized study is a compromise between those who supported an immediate youth camp safety standards bill and those not convinced of the need for such legislation at present.

Robert Novick, BCEM director, noted that no national statistics have been compiled on youth camp safety since 1929-30, when an average of four serious illnesses or injuries occurred each week in each camp. HEW officials, after consultation with experts close to the field, estimate that each year at youth camps there are 250,000 injuries which require medical attention or restriction of activities for a day or more. The majority of these injuries are not serious, but some do result in permanent disability or death.

For the study, a youth camp is defined as one where five or more of the campers are under 18 years old and where there is no parental supervision. These include residential, travel, adventure, primitive, and therapeutic camps sponsored by private citizens, commercial groups, national organizations, church units, community groups, and others.

*Cover:* Symbol of the Health Services and Mental Health Administration's Hypertension Program. An article on international activities in hypertension control begins on page 387.

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