

Health Manpower

in the U. S.

Health manpower is a matter of increasing concern to the United States as a whole and for many States and communities. Forthcoming tabulations of the 1950 Census of Population will provide detailed information as to the actual current situation. Meantime, a summary of data now available may be useful. Such a summary is presented here and is based on counts and estimates prepared by the medical and health professional associations.

Physicians

The latest available information for 1950 estimates a total of 209,040 physicians (table). For 1940 the American Medical Directory listed the names of 201,277 physicians. Of these 9,700 were retired or were not practicing medicine, and 12,500 were associated with Federal agencies. The active non-Federal physicians included about 96,000 general practitioners, 55,000 specialists, 25,000 physicians in hospitals (mainly interns and residents), and almost 4,000 not in private practice.

In the South, the ratio of physicians to population continues to be low. In 1949, the number of active non-Federal physicians per 100,000 population was 91 for the southern States, in contrast to 116 in the North Central Region, 125 in the West, and 158 in the Northeast (New England and Middle Atlantic States). The rate for the United States was 121 active non-Federal physicians per 100,000 population.

The Division of Public Health Methods of the Office of the Surgeon General, Public Health Service, prepared this section.

Present status of health manpower

Field	Number of practitioners, 1950	Number of graduates, 1951	Number of students, 1950-51
Medicine.....	¹ 209,040	6,135	26,191
Dentistry.....	² 86,876	2,830	12,169
Nursing.....	³ 322,300	⁴ 25,790	102,509
Veterinary medicine.....	⁵ 15,305	755	3,226
Sanitary engineering.....	⁶ 5,000	⁶ 403	-----

¹ American Medical Association estimate for Dec. 15, 1950. ² American Dental Directory, 1950. ³ Estimated. ⁴ 1950 data. ⁵ Includes 244 graduates from undergraduate sanitary engineering courses or options within civil engineering courses; 152 with master's degree based on major in sanitary engineering; and 7 with doctor's degree for similar major.

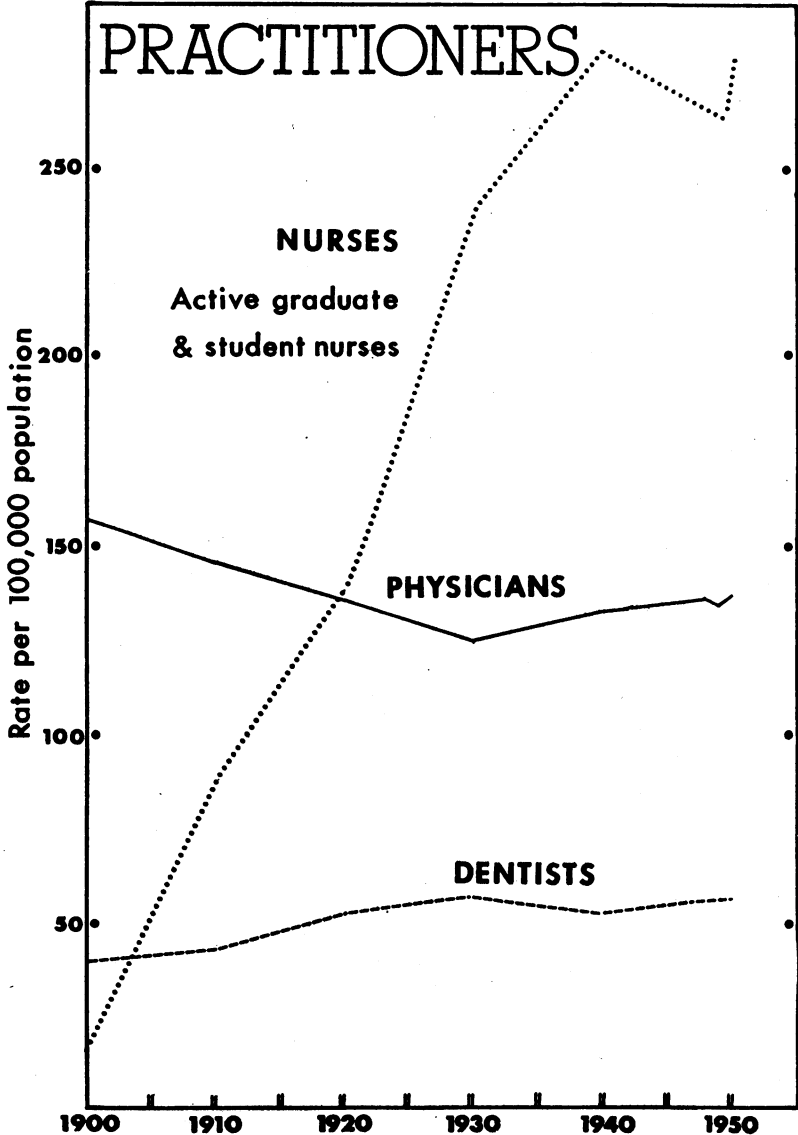


Figure 1.

The ratio of all physicians to population was lower in 1950 than at the beginning of the century (fig. 1). In 1900, there were 119,700 physicians in the United States—157 per 100,000 population. The rate declined until 1930, when there were 125 doctors for 100,000 population, then gradually increased to 133 by 1940 and to 138 by 1950.

For the year 1950-51, the total enrollment of students in the 72 medical schools and the 7 basic science schools which offer the first 2 years of the medical course was 26,191.

The total of 6,135 graduates in 1951 is the largest to date, except for the period of accelerated training during the war, when two classes graduated in 1944 (fig. 2). Prior to 1930, in addition to the number of graduates of approved medical schools, the figures included graduates of schools not meeting class A requirements. In 1910, almost 30 percent of medical school graduates were from class B and class C schools; by 1920, only 12 percent.

Dentists

There were about 87,000 dentists in the United States in 1950—57 per 100,000 population. This is a slight increase over the 1940 rate of 53, but no gain over the 1930 high of 58 (fig. 1). These dentists are unevenly located in relation to population. Low ratios exist in the South, in rural counties, and in low-income areas.

The student body of 41 approved dental schools numbered 12,169 in 1950-51, with 2,830 graduates in 1951. The 1951 graduating class was nearly double the 1940 class and, during the last two decades, it was exceeded only by the peak level of 3,212 in 1945 (fig. 2).

Nurses

Nurses outnumber any other single group of health workers. In 1950, active graduate nurses numbered about 322,300 in addition to about 103,000 students in the 1,170 State-accredited schools. There were 279 active graduate and student nurses per 100,000 population in 1950 (fig. 1). Between 1920 and 1940 the ratio was doubled.

The number of graduates rose steadily until the mid-thirties. Be-

tween 1935 and 1947, the number more than doubled—from less than 20,000 in 1935 and in 1936 to nearly 41,000. In 1948 and 1949, there was a decline, followed by an upward trend, with nearly 26,000 students graduated in 1950.

Other Personnel

Veterinary medicine is a relatively new profession. At the present time, there are more than 15,000 practitioners in this group. The estimated number of sanitary engineers is about 5,000. Forthcoming tabulations of the 1950 Census of Popu-

lation will give counts of many additional health occupation groups.

Health Department Personnel

Relatively few physicians, dentists, and nurses are employed full time in State and local health departments. According to the annual reports submitted by health departments to the Public Health Service, the total number of persons employed full time was 51,370 in 1951 and 46,063 in 1947. In 1951, State health departments accounted for 18,903 and local health departments for 32,467, with the types of personnel classification shown on the next page.

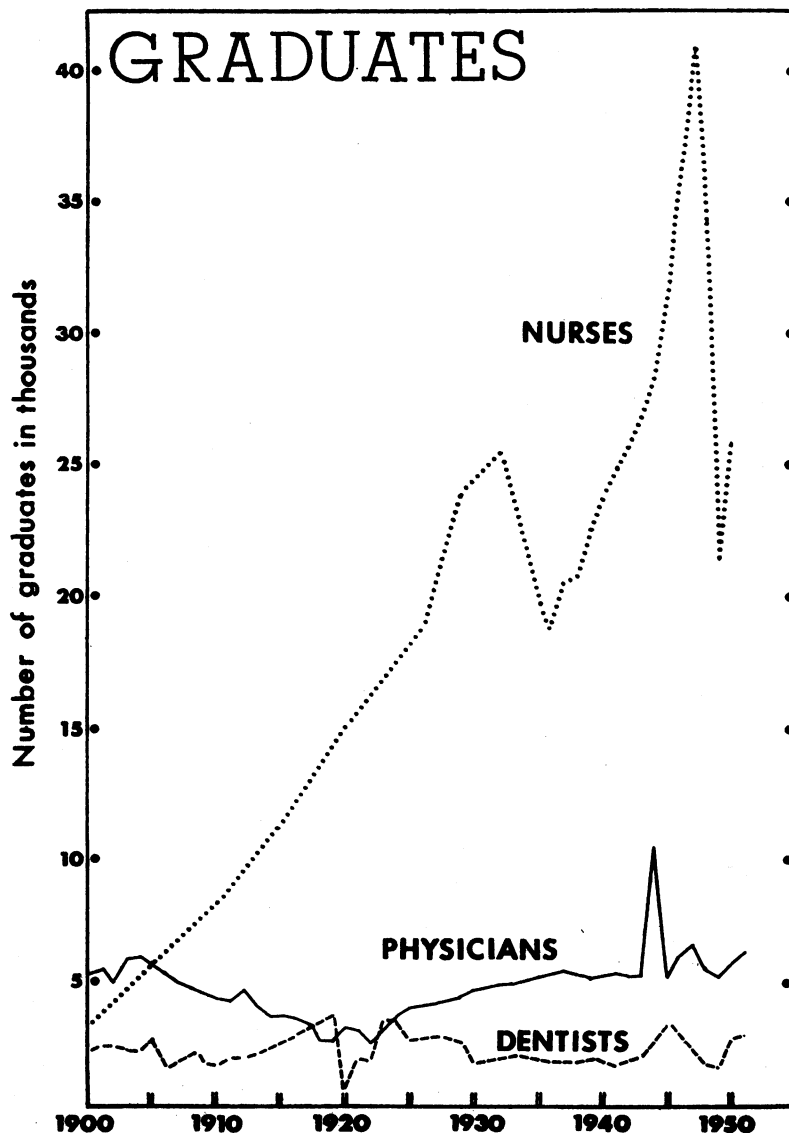


Figure 2.

	<i>Total</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Local</i>	
Physicians.....	2, 248	734	1, 514	Data on which this summary is based are taken from the <i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i> ; the "Dental Students' Register," published by the American Dental Association; "Facts About Nursing," issued by the American Nurses Association; the <i>Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association</i> ; and the National Roster of Sanitary Engineers, prepared by the American Public Health Association under the sponsorship of the National Security Resources Board.
Nurses.....	12, 471	1, 879	10, 592	
Dentists.....	357	135	222	
Sanitation personnel:				
Engineers.....	1, 153	872	281	
Other.....	7, 482	1, 255	6, 227	
Veterinarians.....	346	40	306	
Laboratory personnel.....	3, 077	1, 727	1, 350	
Health educators.....	477	234	243	
Nutritionists.....	223	151	72	
Medical and psychiatric social workers.....	327	193	134	
Clerical, administrative, and fiscal personnel.....	14, 694	7, 648	7, 046	
Other personnel.....	8, 515	4, 035	4, 480	

United States Delegation to Fifth World Health Assembly

Dr. Leonard A. Scheele, Surgeon General, Public Health Service, Federal Security Agency, was designated by the President to serve as chairman of the United States delegation to the Fifth World Health Assembly, which convened at Geneva, Switzerland, May 5, 1952. The Health Assembly is the policy determining body of the World Health Organization.

Other United States delegates to the Assembly are Fannie Hurst Danielson, New York City, and Dr. E. G. McGavran, dean, School of Public Health, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C. Alternates are Dr. Frederick J. Brady and Dr. H. Van Zile Hyde, international health representatives, Division of International Health, Public Health Service, Federal Security Agency, and Howard B. Calderwood, Office of United Nations Economic and Social Affairs, Department of State.

Advisory members of the United States delegation are Donald C. Blaisdell, United States representative for Specialized Agency Affairs at Geneva; Dr. Melvin A. Casberg, chairman, Armed Forces Medical Policy Council, Department of Defense; Dr. Rolf Eliassen, professor of sanitary engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.; Dr. George Foster, director, Institute of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution; Joseph S. Henderson, assistant chief, Division of International Administration, Department of State; Dr. Leonard W. Larson, member, board of trustees, American Medical Association; Dr. Lloyd C. Miller, director of revision, Pharmacopoeia of the United States of America, New York City; Dr. Thomas F. Sellers, director, State Department of Public Health, Atlanta, Ga.; Dr. Knud Stowman, international health representative, Division of International Health, Public Health Service, Federal Security Agency; and Ruth Taylor, chief nursing section, Children's Bureau, Federal Security Agency.

Secretary of the delegation is Walter W. Sohl, Division of International Conferences, Department of State.