

U.s. Department of Health and Human Services Encyclopedia Article

U.s. Department of Health and Human Services

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U.s. Department of Health and Human Services

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is responsible for the welfare, safety, and health of United States citizens. Among other programs, HHS administers drug safety standards, prevents epidemics, and offers assistance to those who are economically disadvantaged.

The **Public Health Service**, a division of HHS, helps state and city governments with health problems. The service studies ways of controlling infectious diseases, works to immunize children, and operates quarantine programs. The agency also operates the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), where most of the nation's health problems are studied. These include occupational health and safety, the dangers of cigarette smoking, and childhood injuries, as well as **communicable diseases** and the epidemic of urban violence. In addition to investigating these problems, the CDC is charged with making policy suggestions on their management. HHS also administers the Social Security and Medicare programs, as well as the Head Start Program.

New lead-content standards for paint and other consumer items grew out of CDC studies. The agency conducts energy related epidemiological research for the **U.S. Department of Energy**, including studies on **radiation exposure**. Through the CDC, the HHS runs the National Center for Health **Statistics**, an **AIDS** Hotline, an international disaster relief team, and programs to monitor influenza epidemics worldwide.

The **Food and Drug Administration** is another agency of HHS. It is charged with responding to new drug research by drug development companies and approving new drugs for use in the United States. Along with the **U.S. Department of Agriculture**, the FDA is responsible for maintaining the safety of the nation's food and drug supply. HHS also administers the **Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry**, which carries out the health-related responsibilities of the Superfund legislation.

Resources

Other

The United States Government Manual, 1992/93. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992.

Organizations

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