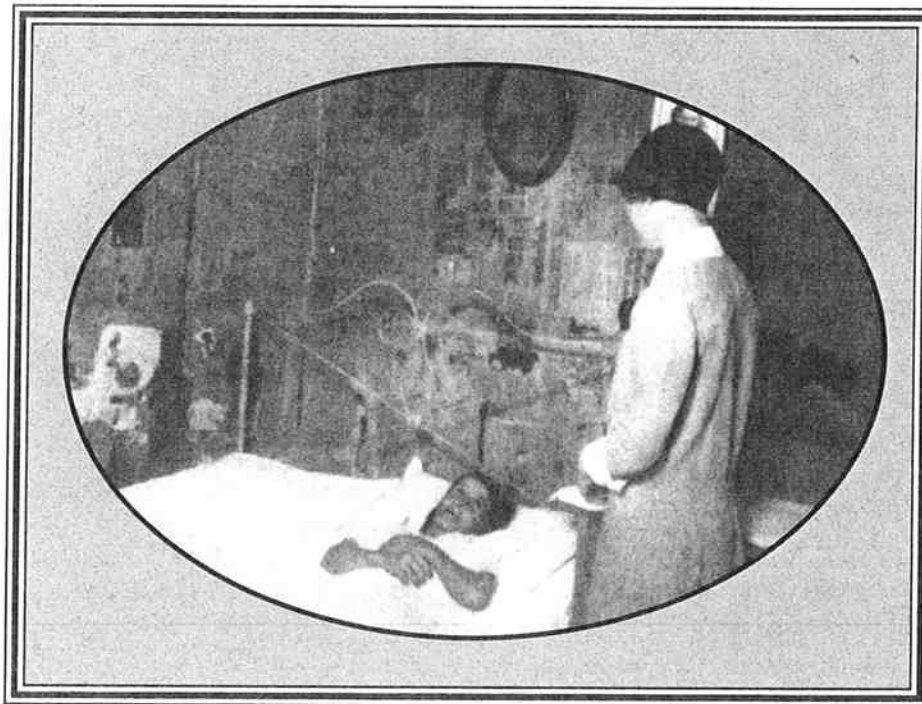


*Commemorating  
50 Years of Service*

**1947-1997**



**Public Health Highlights  
In Kanawha Valley**

*Kanawha-Charleston  
Health Department*

*Dedicated to  
community action to avoid disease and  
other threats to the health and welfare  
of individuals and the community.*

## *Preface*

### *The Celebration of Fifty Years of Public Health*

*In this publication, we have attempted to bring together SOME of the events that have occurred during the past 50 years that were of importance to public health and our community. Public health in our area goes back to the early 1900's. In this brief overview, we touch on some of the major events of public health significance, including the decades prior to the formation of a combined City of Charleston and Kanawha County Health Department in October, 1947.*

*The interesting aspect of working in public health, is that nothing remains static. There is always something old that still rears its head, meriting attention, and there's always something new coming along that becomes a new challenge, which demands our attention and interest.*

*As we enter the 21st century, we are dealing with environmental issues, chronic disease issues (as our population ages), and of course... emerging infections that challenge the diagnostic and management skills of medical teams and allied professionals working on the frontier of medical advancement.*

*We indeed live in exciting times! If we think of the advances that have occurred in medicine within the last 25 years, and we attempt to envision that which will happen within the next 25 years, one has to*

*reflect on the marvels of man, woman, and scientific advancement!  
Public health will be involved with the practical application of these  
advancements.*

*This small booklet presents public health "snapshots in time" over eight  
decades. For 50 of those years. Kanawha-Charleston Health  
Department has been striving to preserve and promote health and to  
prevent disease and injury.*

*Today we pause to celebrate those years of service. to thank and salute  
all who participated.*

*Donald M. Rosenberg, M.D.  
M.P.H., F.A.C.P.M.  
Medical Director  
Kanawha-Charleston Health Department*

*September 27, 1997*

**KANAWHA-CHARLESTON**  
**BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS**

**1997**

**Steven A. Artz, M.D., President**

**David Johnson**

**Arthur Rubin, D.O.**

**Stephen Weber**

**William Nelson**

**Shannon Snodgrass**

## **MEDICAL DIRECTORS**

**1947 - 1997**

<b>L.A. Dickerson, M.D.</b>	<b>October 1947 - December 1957</b>
<b>R.A. Ireland, M.D. Interim Director</b>	<b>December 1957 - January 1958</b>
<b>Page H. Seekford, M.D.</b>	<b>February 1958 - February 1986</b>
<b>Edward Jackson, M.D. Interim Director</b>	<b>March 1986 - June 1986</b>
<b>Donald M. Rosenberg, M.D.</b>	<b>July 1986 - Present</b>

## **SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

### **KANAWHA-CHARLESTON BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS THAT HAVE SERVED TWENTY YEARS OR MORE**

<b>John Connolly</b>	<b>1953 - 1990 (Died in office)</b>
<b>J. William Martin</b>	<b>1959 - 1995</b>
<b>Dr. Peter A. Haley</b>	<b>1961 - 1982</b>
<b>James H. Davis III</b>	<b>1965 - 1994</b>
<b>David C. Johnson</b>	<b>1965 - 1997 (Present member)</b>
<b>Dr. Edward Jackson</b>	<b>1971 - 1993 (Died in office)</b>

## EARLY HISTORY

### PUBLIC HEALTH ACTIVITIES IN KANAWHA VALLEY

**1917** - The first reference to the Charleston Health Department is found in a Sanitary Survey Report of Charleston prepared by Mayo Tolman of the West Virginia State Health Department, in which he speaks of the efforts of the new Health Commissioner, Dr. Richard T. Davis.

The budget for 1917 was \$9,210.00. It listed a health commissioner, a chemist, 3 sanitary officers, 2 crematory hands, 2 garbage haulers and a pound master as staff.

**1918** - The Woman's Hospital Association, which was organized in 1906, employed a nurse to visit the sick in their homes.

**1919** - Dr. R.A. Ireland was appointed City Health Commissioner. During Dr. Ireland's tenure as Health Commissioner, many basic health services were instituted.

**1920** - Kanawha Public Health Nursing Association was organized and its activities were closely coordinated with the City Health Department. This drew national attention as it was one of the first instances of an official and a voluntary health agency working together.

**1921** - In 1911, the Hillcrest Sanitarium was constructed on a high ridge overlooking Charleston. It was built for treating children with tuberculosis because no other care facility was available. In 1921, it was reported that 240 patients had received care, 200 of whom were restored to health. After discharge from the sanitarium, the patients were visited in their homes by visiting nurses from the Nursing Association.

The Charleston Health Department conducted a health survey in sections of the City where diseases and insanitary conditions were most prevalent. The indirect results were the laying of new sewers and sanitary improvements of rental properties.

Dr. Ireland began requiring milk dairies to have their cattle tested for tuberculosis. The City chemist reported the test results in the local newspaper each month.

The Kanawha Public Health Nursing Association was headquartered in the Red Cross Building on Kanawha Street. A total of 3,445 visits were made in 1921. The staff of nurses were on call for any Charleston resident. Their work covered the care of expectant mothers and children from the time of birth up to the age of six years. It was hoped that their work would be extended throughout the entire county, if additional funding was secured.

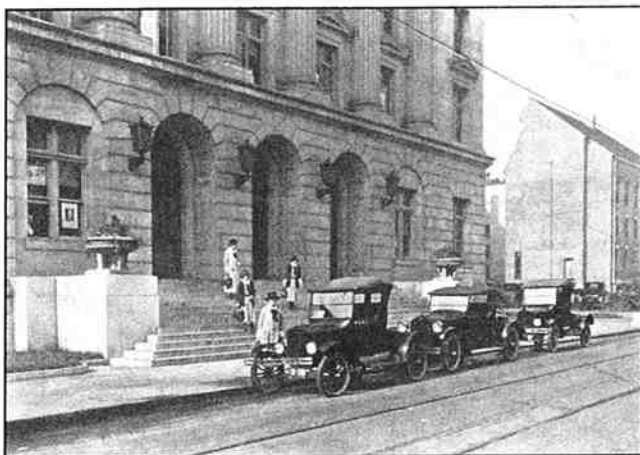


**1922** - Dr. Henshaw, State Health Commissioner, criticized the county health work as being haphazard, unorganized, and with wasting thousands of dollars. "The County has several agencies doing the work that could be carried on more thoroughly and at less expense by one. What Kanawha County needs is a full-time health organization, including a health officer to devote all his time to the County's health work."

The Kanawha Public Health Nursing Association made an appeal for funds to purchase automobiles for the Association.

Miss Mildred Shaw, of Washington, D.C., became the public health nurse in the Cabin Creek District. The expenses of this nurse were paid by a citizen of Charleston, whose identity was not revealed.

The new City Building was officially dedicated. The Health Department was assigned space on the 4th floor, which had been designated as a health center.



**1923** - Dr. J.B. Lohan succeeded Dr. Ireland as Health Commissioner. Dr. Lohan's goals were to develop a practical plan for the coordination and prevention of unnecessary, overlapping and duplication of services among the many volunteer health agencies in the City.

Kanawha County and City of Charleston food handlers were required to carry a certificate to show they were free of contagious diseases. It was suggested that a food handlers' class be established.

Dr. Lohan issued an order for stricter enforcement of the health laws and "put it up to his assistants to obtain

results." A drive was made against open garbage cans and sidewalk food displays. Orders were issued to all local doctors to report all births, deaths, and communicable disease cases promptly.

Representatives of 12 4-H clubs appeared before the County Court petitioning for a full time health unit for Kanawha County for the prevention of disease. In the past, the County had retained only a part-time health officer who was, at the same time, a practicing physician. The budget that was laid before the Court would pay a health officer \$5,000 a year, and provide employment for two public health nurses at a compensation of not less than \$1,800 a year.

Dr. F.M. Kearns, Director of Sanitation, State Department of Education, advised that compulsory medical examination should be required of all school children on the first day of the school term.

A new City health ordinance that called for the examination of all persons engaged in handling and serving foodstuffs in the City went into effect. All proprietors of such establishments were required under the law to make formal applications for permits to conduct a food operation.

A health ordinance was proposed to bring dairies under closer inspection, and banished all cows kept in the City limits for dairy purposes. The main provisions of this bill were that all milk furnished to the citizens would have to be sold in bottles approved by the Health Department. Two grades of milk were specified: Grade A - whose milk came from herds that conformed to the national regulations, and Grade B - whose milk came from herds meeting Health Department health standards. The milk grades, A and B, were based upon the health of the herd, the quality of the milk, and the sanitation level of the farms. Pasteurization was not required.

Free garbage collection started in Charleston, when the furnaces of the old incinerator were rebuilt to accommodate the debris.

Regulations for care of meat on sale in Charleston were issued by the City Health Department.

Three food merchants were arrested for street display of goods. At several stores, it was said that dressed poultry was being hung out and exposed to dust and contaminating elements.

**1924** - This year marked a large scale expansion of clinic activities. In January, more patients were cared for than any other month in the history of the Kanawha Public Health Nursing Association. The Junior League started furnishing volunteer services according to Miss Marguerite J. Claney, supervisor of the Kanawha Public Health Nursing Association.

Dr. Lohan reported that prevention was the aim of the Health Department. His recommendations to Mayor Wertz were the following:

- Pass an ordinance regulating the sale and the production of milk.
- Establish a Bureau of Food and Sanitation.
- Coordinate the work of the Kanawha Public Health Nursing Association with the City staff of nurses.
- Establish a food handlers' clinic, a venereal disease clinic and a baby and prenatal clinic.

The new milk laws went into effect. The City Council adopted an ordinance standardizing the milk supply and standards for dairies. This ordinance allowed the family cow to remain within the City limits, but it would have to be kept in a sanitary stable, which met standards of the Health Department. The cow could not be turned loose to graze.

The City Health Department and the Bureau of Food and Sanitation declared that the ranks of the rats must

be reduced by the thousands, in order to save the good name of the City.

A man with an advanced case of smallpox was running at large in the City with police and health officers on his trail. A total of 36 cases of smallpox in 21 homes in the Crescent Road section was reported.

Two cases of smallpox, one of whom was a teacher in Elk School, were quarantined at the order of Dr. J.B. Lohan.

Mayor Wertz ordered all public gatherings, including church services, to be suspended in portions of West Charleston, because of the smallpox outbreak in that section of the City.

Mayor Wertz advised that if health conditions and sanitary food handling were to continue on a larger scale, then the people of Kanawha County must participate in the work.

Later in 1924, the Health Department advised that the smallpox danger was believed to be over, and the epidemic was under control. Dr. Lohan commended the Nursing Association for their aid and cooperation in stamping out the smallpox epidemic.

Over 6,000 children in the schools of the State were treated with iodine treatment for the prevention of goiters. Charleston schools were among those adopting the treatment.

Dr. Lohan issued a warning concerning typhoid because in 1923, there were 63 cases with 17 deaths. Bathing in polluted water was particularly dangerous. Testing showed that all waters near Charleston were polluted.

A sanitary survey of several buildings used for dwelling purposes in various sections of the City was initiated by the City Health Department.

The City Health Department asked the Police Department to cooperate in the suppression of the dog menace by reporting or capturing every stray dog. This request was made after the death of a 77-year-old man on Gardener Street, who died of hydrophobia (rabies) contracted from the bite of a dog.

Dr. A.E. Hardy, Director of the Bureau of Food and Sanitation of the City Health Department opposed the use of saccharin in soft drinks. The use of saccharin was considered to be an adulterant by the City Ordinance.

**1925** - The need of either a state or a county institution to take care of advanced cases of tuberculosis was stressed. Deaths from tuberculosis had increased substantially. The plea went unheeded.

The fame of the Kanawha Public Health Nursing Association was spreading to such an extent that other cities were taking note of its activities and were sending representatives or writing to inquire how the work was being accomplished.

Typhoid fever cost Charleston and Kanawha County \$129,150 in 1925. Twenty-one people died of this disease.

As a result of the new milk ordinance, over \$150,000 had been spent on improvements of dairy farms, milk houses, and two pasteurization plants. Since milk sanitation had improved, the City Health Department turned its attention to the uncontrolled selling of unwholesome food. Every animal that was sold for food in the City was inspected and stamped with the Health Department's approval. If the food was found to be unhealthy, coal oil was poured on it at once, and it was ordered to be disposed of at the incinerator.

Kanawha Public Health Nursing Association, in its annual report, stated that Charleston was one of the few cities in the United States that was successful in

combining a governmental agency with a private one. Charleston was the only city at this time that had a full-time tuberculosis nurse.

**1926** - The Kanawha Health Nursing Association announced that a maternity service was being organized.

The Kanawha County Health Department was organized.

Dr. John Thames, United States Public Health Service Field Agent, was selected to head the County Health Department.

**1927** - Dr. Hugh Robins became City Health Commissioner. During the 10 years of Dr. Robins' tenure, health services were improved and stabilized.

Generalized public health programs, including Kanawha County School supervision, were begun.

The County Health Department began doing nursing visits, and the Kanawha Nursing Association began to confine its activities strictly to the corporate limits of the City of Charleston.

**1929** - Dr. John Thames, Director of the County Health Department, reported that during his administration, there had been a 30% reduction in deaths from tuberculosis.

Dr. Thames urged the combination of County and City Health Departments where the population was less than 100,000.

The Charleston Public Health Association was started. The object of this organization was to assist the physician in the care of the sick at home, and to instruct the mother in the care of the family. The services were extended to all persons needing the service of a nurse in their homes, regardless of their financial condition.