Guide to the American Public Health Association Records

MS 810

compiled by R. Joseph Anderson, Nancy Robertson, and Alan Hoffman

November 1981

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 810

CREATOR: American Public Health Association

TITLE: American Public Health Association records

DATES: 1938–1972

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 7 linear feet (15 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Papers collected by Arthur J. Viseltear in connection with his research on the development of the American Public Health Association’s Medical Care Section. Included are relevant records from the organization (1940-1957) documenting its research into the question of incorporating medical care into public health with special reports on medical care for the indigent, rural medicine, and relations between hospitals and health departments. In 1948 the advocates of medical care succeeded with the establishment of a Medical Care Section of the APHA and papers of the Section (1948-1972) are also in the collection. The bulk of these records are from 1967 to 1972. Included are correspondence, memoranda, minutes, texts of papers presented at annual meetings and other documents, as well as the files of fourteen administrative and subject committees within the Medical Care Section. Viseltear also contributed his own research and interview notes together with journal articles and printed materials related to the question of medical care and public health, which form a useful source of background material. Major correspondents in the papers include Reginald M. Atwater, Lester Breslow, Dean A. Clark, Haven Emerson, Isidore S. Falk, Franz Goldmann, Wilton L. Halverson, and C.-E. A. Winslow. These papers form part of the Contemporary Medical Care and Health Policy Collection.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0810

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0810.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:
American Public Health Association (A.P.H.A.) Papers were collected by Arthur J. Viseltear while he was conducting research on the development of the A.P.H.A.’s Medical Care Section. The papers, which extend from 1938 to 1972, document A.P.H.A.’s official recognition of medical care as a discipline within the public health profession through the establishment during the 1940s of two successive medical care subdivisions within the organization. The recognition of medical care, though controversial and divisive, represented a critical step in the development of both the A.P.H.A. and the public health profession.

Medical care, which concerns the costs, organization, and delivery of health services, began to develop as a field within public health during the 1920s. C.-E. A. Winslow and other progressive public health leaders recognized that progress in medical science was resulting in increasingly fragmented, costly, and unevenly distributed health services, and they maintained that the traditional division between medicine and public health (which limited the latter field to sanitation, preventive medicine and public health education) was artificial and unrealistic. They further argued that the profession and the A.P.H.A. should play an advocacy role in developing comprehensive national plans for improving and rationalizing the delivery of health services.

Traditionalists within the A.P.H.A. and the profession, for a variety of reasons, opposed the expansion of public health into areas which had been limited to medical practitioners. One of their chief concerns was that partisanship on social issues would dilute the profession’s effectiveness and would generate an
intense reaction among physicians. Tension between the two groups increased during the 1930s and 1940s as compulsory federal health insurance, which was supported either in whole or in part by many advocates of medical care, became the subject of a heated national debate in Congress and in the press.

The advocates of medical care made halting progress during the 1930s and early 1940s towards making the organization address medical care issues and recognize medical care as a discipline. An important milestone was achieved in early 1944 when the Subcommittee on Medical Care was formed within the Committee on Administrative Practice. During 1944 the subcommittee drafted a report, “Medical Care in a National Health Program,” which endorsed the adoption of a comprehensive national health program. After lengthy debate the report was adopted as an official statement of A.P.H.A. policy at the organization’s annual meeting in October 1944. In 1945 the Subcommittee on Medical Care began an ambitious program of studies which were largely funded by annual operating grants from the Rockefeller Foundation.

The Subcommittee on Medical Care occupied an anomalous position within the organizational structure of the A.P.H.A. Its scope was broader than that of the Committee on Administrative Practice (C.A.P.), its parent body, yet it could be dissolved at the will of the C.A.P. Therefore, some supporters of medical care sought to achieve a stronger and more secure status for their discipline within the A.P.H.A. hierarchy. In early 1948 the subcommittee chairman appointed a Committee for the Creation of a Medical Care Section (C.C.M.C.S.), and shortly thereafter the committee secretary announced that the establishment of a Medical Care Section would be proposed to the A.P.H.A. Governing Council at the annual meeting scheduled for November. Since the A.P.H.A. sections represented the functional categories into which the public health profession was divided, section status for medical care would give individuals involved in diverse aspects of medical care and social medicine an equal voice with other traditional divisions of the profession.

During the summer and fall the C.C.M.C.S. canvassed unaffiliated members and non-members of the A.P.H.A. and prepared a series of documents supporting the creation of the section. A motion for the creation of a Medical Care Section was presented to the Governing Council during its meeting on November 11, 1948. After lengthy debate, including eloquent presentations by Winslow and Haven Emerson respectively supporting and opposing the motion, it was carried by a vote of 55 to 16. The creation of the section did not eliminate the Subcommittee on Medical Care. The subcommittee, which had both funding and an active program, continued to function until 1957.

By establishing the Medical Care Section, A.P.H.A. officially recognized that the organization, costs, and delivery of health services were within the purview of public health. By so doing, the A.P.H.A. has become a primary organization promoting public health. For a comprehensive history of the development of medical care, see Arthur J. Viseltear, “Emergence of the Medical Care Section of the American Public Health Association, 1926-1948,” American Journal of Public Health, vol. 63, No. 11 (Series III, folder 33).

**Scope and Contents**

The American Public Health Association Papers span the period 1938 to 1972, although the bulk of the papers cover the years 1940-1957 and 1967-1972. They include some official A.P.H.A. records, copies of other A.P.H.A. material, documents from other sources, journal articles and reprints and Dr. Viseltear’s research notes.

The papers are arranged in three series: COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MEDICAL CARE; MEDICAL CARE SECTION; and BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH MATERIAL. The papers are fragmented and incomplete, but they selectively document the development of organized medical care within the A.P.H.A. as well as the routine operations of the Medical Care Section in the 1960s and early 1970s. The earlier papers contain a variety of materials which provide information on the roles played by leading public health figures in the recognition of medical care by the A.P.H.A. The papers include extensive correspondence of A.P.H.A. Executive Secretary Reginald M. Atwater and correspondence, memoranda and other material from Subcommittee on Medical Care Chairman Joseph Mountin and subcommittee staff members Howard M. Kline and Milton Terris. They also contain occasional items from a number of other important figures, including Lester Breslow, Dean A. Clark, Haven Emerson, Isidore S.
Falk, Franz Goldmann, Wilton Halverson, and C.-E. A. Winslow. An index to select correspondents is located at the end of the register and lists major correspondents by series and folder number.

Series I, COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MEDICAL CARE, extends from 1940 to 1957 and consists of General Papers and Project and Subject Files. The General Papers section is arranged chronologically in two groups, correspondence and administrative files. The early correspondence (i.e., 1940, 1943-1945) is incomplete but includes correspondence of A.P.H.A. Executive Secretary Reginald M. Atwater, Joseph Mountin, Michael M. Davis and others which provides information on the impetus to establish the subcommittee and on its early development. The later correspondence is more general. In addition to announcements and circular letters, it covers a variety of administrative topics and policy issues, including funding, personnel, rural medicine, medical care for the indigent, and relations between hospitals and health departments. The administrative files in General Papers are incomplete but include minutes and reports which document policy making within the subcommittee.

The Project and Subject Files section is arranged alphabetically by topic. The section includes correspondence, notes, reports, statements and other material which cover medical care for the indigent, quality of medical care, and other major subject areas.

Series II, MEDICAL CARE SECTION, contains some material for the years 1948-1965, although the bulk of the series dates from 1967 to 1972. Series II is organized in two sections, General Papers and Committee and Council Files. General Papers is arranged chronologically and includes correspondence, memoranda, minutes, reports, newsletters, and texts of papers presented at annual meetings. Though the papers are fragmented, they provide information on executive board meetings, routine administrative activities, and annual meetings. The special reports (folders 6 and 7) include “An Evaluation of the Medical Care Section,” which contains background material on the development of the section.

The Committee and Council Files contain correspondence, minutes and other material of fourteen administrative and subject committees within the Medical Care Section. The files date from 1965 to 1972 and are arranged alphabetically by committee. Most of the committees represented were charged with the routine administrative functions of the organization, including nominations, membership, and annual meeting programs. The subject or “action” committee files provide information on several subject areas within the field of medical care, including equal health rights and international medical care.

Series III, BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH MATERIAL, consists of core documentation which Professor Viseltear collected in researching the history of the Medical Care Section. It includes A.P.H.A. correspondence, minutes, and reports (some of which are duplicated in the first two series); documents from other sources; journal articles and reprints; and Viseltear’s research and interview notes. The latter constitute approximately one quarter of the series. The original filing order and folder captions have been retained; the research and interview notes are interfiled with source materials to which they relate. The series is organized in four sections: Subcommittee on Medical Care, A.P.H.A. General, Other Papers, and Notes and Drafts. Each section is arranged chronologically.

The Subcommittee on Medical Care section contains information on the founding of the subcommittee, including notes and a few documents relating to a predecessor organization, the Subcommittee on the Organized Care of the Sick. The bulk of the section dates from 1943 to 1949 and provides extensive information on the development of the subcommittee and the Medical Care Section. Correspondence and reports by Atwater, Mountin, Falk, Emerson and others document the support for as well as opposition to the recognition of medical care by the A.P.H.A.

The other three sections in the series include A.P.H.A. minutes and reports, documents from other organizations, and Viseltear’s interview notes.

The A.P.H.A. Papers were donated to Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, by Arthur J. Viseltear in 1978. The American Public Health Association Papers are part of the Contemporary Medical Care and Health Policy Collection. Several other manuscript groups within the collection contain papers of individuals such as C. B. Esselstyn, Isidore Falk and Ira Hiscock, who participated in the development of the Subcommittee on Medical Care and the Medical Care Section.
Arrangement

Arranged in three series: I. Committee on Administrative Practice, Subcommittee on Medical Care. II. Medical Care Section. III. Background and Research Material.
**Collection Contents**

**Series I. COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MEDICAL CARE**

3 linear feet (6 boxes)

Series I is organized in two sections, *General Papers and Project and Subject Files*. *General Papers* is arranged in two groups, correspondence and administrative files, and both are filed chronologically. *Project and Subject Files* is arranged alphabetically by topic. Folders under a given topic are arranged chronologically.

### General papers

| b. 1, f. 1-19 | Correspondence | 1940, 1943–1952 January–March |
| b. 2, f. 20-38 | Correspondence | 1952 April – 1956 January |
| b. 3, f. 39-43 | Correspondence | 1956 February – 1957 |
| b. 3, f. 44 | Financial papers | 1949–1954 |
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| b. 3, f. 49-50 | Minutes and agendas | 1950–1956 |
| b. 3, f. 51 | Publications and bibliographies | 1947–1957 |
| b. 3, f. 52 | Annual reports and budget requests to Rockefeller Foundation | 1945–1946 |
| b. 3, f. 53 | Progress reports | 1946–1956 |
| b. 3, f. 54 | Annual reports and budget requests to Rockefeller Foundation | 1947–1948 |
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| b. 4, f. 56 | Annual reports to Rockefeller Foundation | 1949–1951 |
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| b. 4, f. 59 | Annual reports to New York Foundation | 1954–1957 |
| b. 4, f. 60 | Annual reports and budget requests to Rockefeller Foundation | 1955–1956 |
| b. 4, f. 61 | Annual report to Committee on Administrative Practice from Subcommittee on Chronic Disease and Rehabilitation | 1955–1956 |

### Project and Subject Files

Chronic disease control
### Project and Subject Files > Chronic disease control (continued)

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<td>b. 4, f. 63</td>
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Series II is organized in two sections, General Papers and Committee and Council Files. General Papers is arranged chronologically. Committee and Council Files is arranged alphabetically by subdivision. Folders within a subdivision are arranged chronologically.

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**Committee and Council Files**

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1.5 linear feet (3 boxes)

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Selected Search Terms
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Subjects
Health boards
Medical care
Medicine
Medicine, Rural
Public health -- United States

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Contemporary Medical Care and Health Policy Collection

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