

of resident patients declined, for the fourth consecutive year, to 10,730, representing a decrease of 499 patients, or 4.4 per cent, since 1957. And yet, these hospitals treated a record 19,473 patients last year, an increase of 2.7 per cent over the previous year. Also attesting to the high quality of our program is the fact that a record 4,602 patients were discharged last year, nearly 60 per cent having been hospitalized for less than a year.

Both the capital and the operational budgets reflect the determination of this administration to strive for the betterment of conditions within our mental institutions and for the improvement of the care and treatment of persons afflicted with mental illnesses. To assure a higher level of patient care, and to staff, equip and operate new facilities which have been provided, I am recommending that the budget for the Department of Mental Hygiene be increased by \$1,004,810 next year. In the capital program, I am making provision for a continued orderly expansion of the physical plant of this department. I would direct your attention, in particular, to recommendations I have made to meet both the immediate and long-range requirements for adequate hospital facilities for the mentally ill and the mentally retarded.

In Mental Hygiene, there is evidence of a healthy growth in activities, especially in regard to community services. It is expected that there will be increased emphasis on both patient and community services to the mentally ill and the mentally retarded, as well as to special groups such as alcoholic and narcotics patients.

For the Department of Health, I am asking you to approve an additional appropriation of \$4,256,211 for its operations next year. From your examination of the detailed budget, you will note that a major portion of this increase—roughly, 80 per cent of it—has been earmarked for the extension and improvement of medical care service. In this broadened program, we have made provisions to relieve hospitals caring for indigent cases, in the amount of approximately \$800,000, by advancing the basis of the 80 per cent per diem costs from two years to one year.

Also, we have increased the rate of payments, established fifteen years ago, to physicians who provide services under this program.

In the public health program, too, you will note that an initial contribution has been made toward the State's assumption of responsibility for the tuberculosis patients now treated in the Baltimore City Hospitals.