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The State Department of Health, established in 1874, is governed by the State Board of Health. The Board is composed of the Director of the Department, who also serves as chairman, the Commissioner of Health of Baltimore City, and six members appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to serve for terms of six years (Code 1951, Art. 43, sec. 1).

The Department of Health serves the State through twenty-three sanitary districts organized along county lines. Each county health department is in charge of a health officer who serves as the Deputy State Health Officer for his district. For regulatory purposes the Montgomery County Council and the Board of County Commissioners in each of the other counties serves ex-officio as the county board of health (Code 1951, Art. 43, secs. 6-10, 45-52).

The State Board of Health has broad and inclusive powers over health and hygiene matters of the State. These functions and responsibilities include: collection, study and publication of communicable disease data; laboratory analysis of water, sewage, trade wastes, milk products, food, drugs, and other materials that may be responsible for the transmission of infectious diseases; examination and supervision of public and private water supply, sewage disposal, ventilation, heat and lighting in public institutions and control of nuisances; registration, tabulation and publication of vital statistics (including birth, death and marriage records); study of the causes of death and illness among mothers and young children and provisions of services for mothers and children; administration of a medical care program for indigent and medically indigent residents of Maryland's counties; operation of the hospitals placed under the Board's jurisdiction; investigation of complaints made by physicians or affected citizens; licensing of midwives; laboratory testing of food and drug specimens to assure compliance with laws prohibiting adulteration and misbranding and prosecution of violators (Code 1951, Art. 43, secs. 32-44).

To carry out these duties the Board of Health established within the Department seven bureaus, as follows: Office of the Deputy Director, including divisions of Local Health Services, Vital Records and Statistics, Public Health Nursing, and Communicable Disease Control; Bureau of Laboratories; Bureau of Preventive Medicine, including divisions of Maternal and Child Health, Crippled Children and Heart Disease Control, Dental Health, Venereal Disease Control, Mental Hygiene and Alcohol Studies; Bureau of Tuberculosis; Bureau of Medical Services and Hospitals, including divisions of Home Medical Care, Hospital Services and Cancer Control; Bureau of Environmental Hygiene, including divisions of Sanitary Engineering, Industrial Health and Air Pollution, Food Control, Drug Control, and Bedding and Upholstery; and a Bureau of Management. The Execu-