

NEW YORK CITY MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES
31 CHAMBERS ST., NEW YORK, NY 10007

Guide to the records of the Health Commissioners, 1928-1991

Collection No. REC 0050

Original processing by project archivists Katie Ehrlich, Clinton Johnson, and Sheana Corbridge, with staff archivists Rachel Greer and Ian Kern, 2017-2019.

Summary

Record Group: RG 036: Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Title of the Collection: Health Commissioners records

Creator(s): New York (N.Y.). Department of Health; New York (N.Y.). Health Services Administration; Baumgartner, Leona, 1902-1991; Bernecker, Edward M.; Brown, Howard Junior, 1924-1975; Bushel, Arthur; Cimino, Joseph Anthony; Ferrer, Reinaldo Antonio; James, George, - 1972; Joseph, Stephen C.; Mahoney, John F. (John Friend), 1889-1957; McLaughlin, Mary C.; Mustard, Harry S. (Harry Stoll), 1889-1966; Myers, Woodrow A.; O'Rourke, Edward J.; Philp, John R.; Rice, John L.; Sencer, David J.; Stebbins, Ernest L. (Ernest Lyman), 1901-; Weinstein, Israel, 1893-1975; Wynne, Shirley W. (Shirley Wilmotte), 1882-1942

Date: 1928-1991

Abstract: New York City government has played a role in promoting the health of its residents since 1866. This collection represents that function under the purview of the Department of Health, from 1928 to 1991. The records document the Department's wide-ranging operations through correspondence, reports, statistics, promotional material, memos and other records.

Collection #: REC 0050

Extent: 742.5 cubic feet (1,456 manuscript boxes, 10 records storage cartons, 11 oversize boxes, and 5 flat file drawers)

Language: English

Physical Location: Materials are stored offsite and require advance notice for use. Requests to view offsite material should be sent to research@archives.nyc.gov at least two weeks prior to your research date to allow for their transfer to 31 Chambers St.

Repository: New York City Municipal Archives, Department of Records and Information Services, 31 Chambers St., New York, NY 10007

Immediate Source of Acquisition: The collection was transferred from the Department of Health to the Municipal Archives in 1990 and 2002.

Existence and Location of Copies: This collection has not been digitized or microfilmed.

Preferred Citation: Identification of item, date; Health Commissioners records, 1928-1991; REC 0050; Series name; box number; folder number; Municipal Archives, City of New York

Separated Materials: Oversize items have been removed from their original location and stored in flat boxes or drawers. Separation sheets mark their original location.

Sponsor



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Processing Information

The records originally were created or maintained in the Office of the Commissioner of the Department of Health. Records in this collection were accessioned by the archives in 1990, 2002, 2018, and 2019.

Records from each calendar year were arranged together regardless of if a new commissioner took over in the middle of the year. The archivists did not disturb this arrangement. Therefore, the records from the beginning of a commissioner's tenure may be found with the preceding commissioner's records, depending on the date they took office.

The archivists retained the order of the material that was apparent from when it arrived at the Municipal Archives, though some reorganization was necessary to maintain consistent alphabetical or chronological arrangement. Original folder titles were retained. Any folder titles appearing in brackets were conceived by the archivist. Records in sub-subgroups 12 through 18 were often incomplete and haphazard as compared with the records in the first half of the collection. These later sub-subgroups required more organizational intervention from the archivists.

City personnel records have been weeded as have patient records, and duplicate reports and memos.

Access and Use

Collection is open for research. Advance notice is required for using original material. Please contact research@archives.nyc.gov to arrange access.

The New York City Municipal Archives collections may contain personal, sensitive, or confidential information relating to private individuals that is protected by New York City's Personal Identifying Information Law, federal or state privacy laws, and various regulations. Thus, the New York City Municipal Archives may restrict access to portions of this collection per existing statutory restrictions on personally identifiable information.

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Biographical/Historical Note

The New York City Department of Health (now the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene since 2002) has existed in its modern form since 1870. At that time the Department and its predecessor (Metropolitan Board of Health) were largely concerned with issuing birth and death certificates and ensuring the cleanliness of the city, which was thought to be linked to disease outbreaks. The late 19th and early 20th centuries brought an understanding that germs caused infectious diseases and that some illnesses could be prevented by vaccination or inoculation. With these scientific developments, the Department of Health began to take on more proactive role in promoting the health of the city.

This collection of records begins at the onset of the Great Depression, when ideas were circulating about how much and what kind of services the government should provide for its people. Under the New Deal, the U.S. government pumped money into New York government agencies to bolster services for struggling residents and put them to work by financing the building of new housing, schools, and public works projects. This enabled the Department of Health to fully implement a program that had been floating around the Department as an idea for more than a decade. The Department divided into 30 health districts, with the goal of comparing health markers geographically and establishing locally tailored health services in city-operated clinics. Within the next decade, 14 district health centers were constructed, as was a new headquarters for the Department. Residents could avail themselves of many free and/or low-cost services such as lab tests, vaccinations, tuberculosis screening, and maternal and child health education. Staff doctors and nurses also went out into the communities to monitor a variety of conditions including tuberculosis and venereal diseases.

During World War II the Department expanded services for women and new mothers whose husbands were serving and tied health issues to patriotism in its education and outreach efforts. The scope of the Department's services continued to expand post World War II and benefitted from the booming economy. The Department undertook large-scale vaccination campaigns including one against smallpox in 1947 under threat of an outbreak and in 1954 against polio, which eliminated incidence of the disease within a decade. In 1963 the city disseminated the new measles vaccine. Health officials put renewed focus on infant and maternal mortality rates and waded into providing contraception. Acceptance of the efficacy of antibiotics helped contain some infectious diseases that had posed a much bigger threat in prior decades.

By the late 1960s, the city's looming financial crisis and insolvency coupled with the reorganization of city government under Mayor John Lindsay left the Department of Health without the resources and clout it had come to expect. Lindsay grouped the Department of Health, Department of Hospitals, Community Mental Health Board, and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner under a new umbrella agency called the Health Services Administration, placing an additional level of bureaucracy between commissioners and the mayor. This relationship is reflected in the records. The city's public hospitals were overrun and in dire

condition and received more of the resources and focus of City Hall at this time. The Health Services Administration and most of Lindsay's other superagencies were ultimately dismantled in 1977 under Mayor Abraham Beame and the Department of Health regained its autonomy.

During the 1970s, more and more money was cut from city agencies each year. The Department curtailed services at its clinics, closed clinics and dropped programs deemed nonessential. The city struggled to keep salaries competitive with the private sector and therefore the Department of Health was unable to attract the caliber of professional staff it needed. Meanwhile, New York City had been undergoing dramatic demographic and social changes that the city struggled to respond to. The health-related consequences of these changes were worsening homelessness, narcotics addiction, alcoholism, venereal diseases, lead poisoning, and other environmental and housing concerns tied to poverty. The Department put its scant resources toward these urgent problems while becoming increasingly reliant on federal, state, and private funding for these crucial programs. It also gave the state control over some programs, such as methadone treatment.

While some of the Department's functions were stripped away in the 1960s and 1970s, it played vital role in at least two specific areas: Medicaid and abortion. The Department of Health was the entity responsible for launching and administering Medicaid for millions of New Yorkers in 1966. Department officials established the care standards for reimbursement from the program. In 1970, New York State legalized abortion prior to the landmark *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision. City health officials created the guidelines for obtaining abortions within the five boroughs, including prescribing who could perform the procedure and where and how to report statistics.

The Department of Health was regaining its footing after the fiscal crisis of the 1970s when HIV/AIDS appeared. The Department mobilized epidemiological and investigative efforts to figure out how the illness was spread and coordinated with community groups but struggled to secure federal funding as the U.S. government continued to cut spending to health programs. The Department of Health returned to a more active role in public health even as it anticipated the crisis would continue to worsen in the coming years. City government, including DOH, was widely and famously criticized for not being more proactive about prevention and education. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the city suffered additional financial downturns and the Department faced more drastic budget cuts, paring it down even further. Funding for AIDS programs, however, remained a priority.

Even as it took on new and urgent responsibilities over the 20th century, the health department maintained its original role of safeguarding aspects of everyday New Yorkers' environments including food, milk, consumer products, pets and animals, air, beach/water quality, pest control, and housing and property conditions. The city's Department of Health predated New York State Department of Health and mostly maintained its own separate regulations. The city's Health Code (originally called the Sanitary Code), which contains all of these rules, became increasingly robust over this time period. Some of the Department's most pronounced efforts in the quality of life realm include sustained work to ensure the public, especially infants, had

safe milk to drink during the early part of the 20th century, mandating window guards for apartment buildings in the 1970s, and banning indoor smoking in the 1980s.

The Department of Health has continued to provide core services as political and economic forces have moved the country more toward private modes of health care over of the 20th century.

Dates of Commissioners' Tenures

Shirley W. Wynne

August 1, 1928–January 1, 1934

John L. Rice

January 1, 1934–July 16, 1942

Ernest Lyman Stebbins

July 16, 1942–March 4, 1946

Edward M. Bernecker

March 4, 1946–March 13, 1946

Israel Weinstein

March 13, 1946–November 3, 1947

Harry Stoll Mustard

November 3, 1947–January 1, 1950

John Friend Mahoney

January 1, 1950–January 1, 1954

Leona Baumgartner

January 1, 1954–October 2, 1962

George James

October 2, 1962–October 1965

John R. Philp

October 1965–January 14, 1966 (acting)

Arthur Bushel

January 14, 1966–June 1, 1966 (acting)

Howard Junior Brown

June 1, 1966–December 15, 1966

Edward O'Rourke

December 15, 1966–May 28, 1969

Mary C. McLaughlin

May 28, 1969–January 17, 1972

Joseph Anthony Cimino

January 17, 1972–January 7, 1974

Lowell E. Bellin

January 7, 1974–January 3, 1977

Pascal James Imperato

January 3, 1977–March 31, 1978

Reinaldo Antonio Ferrer

March 31, 1978–November 28, 1981

David Judson Sencer

November 28, 1981–March 11, 1986

Stephen C. Joseph

March 11, 1986–January 19, 1990

Woodrow A. Myers, Jr.

January 19, 1990–June 11, 1991

Sources

Colgrove, James Keith. *Epidemic City: The Politics of Public Health in New York*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011.

Protecting Public Health in New York City: 200 Years of Leadership; 1805-2005, The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, April 2005.

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/bicentennial/historical-booklet.pdf>

Scope and Content Note

The Health Commissioners records, 1928-1991 represent the files of 21 individuals who have held the top position at the New York City Department of Health. The collection documents the wide-ranging activities of the Department of Health including disease prevention and surveillance, food safety, education, health clinic operations, vital statistics, health services for public school children, and various kinds of environmental monitoring. These operations are represented by the health commissioners' correspondence within the department, with other city agencies, outside entities, and also the public. The commissioners' records also contain reports, publications, statistics, promotional material, memos, press releases and speeches.

Some of the major trends and events the collection covers include regulating the milk supply, vaccinating the city against polio, tackling drug addiction and sexually-transmitted diseases in periods of changing social norms, focusing on maternal and child health, and answering citizens' complaints and questions. There is a wealth of material about polio, the AIDS crisis, the administration of city health clinics, and Medicaid.

The collection documents the ways in which the department has been impacted by the city's economic circumstances and federal policy towards health care. These changes are reflected in the organization of the records. Records from the 1970s, when the city was undergoing fiscal insolvency, are incomplete.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into 18 sub-subgroups, based on the commissioner who held the office. When more than one individual occupied the office in a single calendar year, the records of that year are included in the records of the outgoing commissioner.

Sub-subgroup Outline

1. Shirley W. Wynne, 1928-1933
2. John L. Rice, 1934-1942
3. Ernest Lyman Stebbins, 1943-1945
4. Edward M. Bernecker, 1946
5. Israel Weinstein, 1946-1947
6. Harry Stoll Mustard, 1948-1949
7. John F. Mahoney, 1950-1953
8. Leona Baumgartner, 1954-1962
9. George James, 1963-1965
10. John R. Philp, Arthur Bushel, and Howard Junior Brown, 1966
11. Edward M. O'Rourke, 1967-1969
12. Mary McLaughlin, 1970
13. Joseph Anthony Cimino, 1973
14. Lowell E. Bellin, 1974-1977
15. Reinaldo Antonio Ferrer, 1977-1981
16. David Judson Sencer, 1982-1986
17. Stephen C. Joseph, 1987-1989
18. Woodrow A. Myers, Jr., 1989-1991

Key Terms

Names

New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation
New York (N.Y.). Board of Health
New York (N.Y.). Department of Health
New York (N.Y.). Health Services Administration
Baumgartner, Leona, 1902-1991
Bernecker, Edward M.
Brown, Howard Junior, 1924-1975
Bushel, Arthur
Cimino, Joseph Anthony
Ferrer, Reinaldo Antonio
James, George, -1972
Joseph, Stephen C.
Mahoney, John F. (John Friend), 1889-1957
McLaughlin, Mary C.
Mustard, Harry S. (Harry Stoll), 1889-1966
Myers, Woodrow A.
O'Rourke, Edward J.
Philp, John R.
Rice, John L.
Sencer, David J.
Stebbins, Ernest L. (Ernest Lyman), 1901-
Weinstein, Israel, 1893-1975
Wynne, Shirley W. (Shirley Wilmotte), 1882-1942

Places

New York (N.Y.)
New York (N.Y.) -- Politics and government -- 1898-1951
New York (N.Y.) -- Politics and government -- 1951-

Subjects

Abortion
AIDS (Disease)
Child health services
Children -- Health and hygiene
Communicable diseases
Diphtheria
Drug addiction
Environmental health
HIV infections
Infants -- Mortality

Measles
Medicaid
Medicare
Milk hygiene
Mothers -- Mortality
Municipal government -- New York (State) -- New York
Noise control
Nutrition policy
Pests -- Control
Poliomyelitis
Public health
Rats -- Control
Restaurants -- Sanitation
Sanitary landfills
Sanitation
School health services
Sexual health
Sexually transmitted diseases
Smoking -- Law and legislation
Tuberculosis
Vaccines

Occupations

Government employees
Health officers
Medical personnel
Nurses
Physicians

Material Types

Brochures
Clippings (information artifacts)
Correspondence
Fliers (printed matter)
Minutes (administrative records)
Official reports
Posters
Press releases
Public affairs radio programs

Subgroup 1: Commissioner's Office

Sub-subgroup 1: Shirley W. Wynne, 1928-1933

67 cubic feet (134 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. Shirley W. Wynne was a career official at the Department of Health and served as commissioner from 1928 to 1934. He was born in Manhattan on November 21, 1882. Wynne received his medical degree from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University in 1904. After working briefly in private practice, he joined the Board of Health as an inspector in 1907. Wynne gradually rose through the ranks of the Department, serving as assistant registrar of the Bureau of Records, assistant to the commissioner, director of Hospitals, and deputy commissioner. While working for the Department, he also earned a doctorate in public health from New York University.

Having served as deputy to Commissioner Dr. Louis I. Harris, Wynne stepped into the top role at the Department of Health after Harris retired in 1928. During his tenure Wynne continued work on citywide issues such as disease prevention, milk and food safety, and health education, but there were also notable changes and advancements in the way city government addressed public health during these years.

Wynne's tenure saw the implementation of city health districts, initially proposed by Commissioner Sigismund Goldwater in the 1910s. The city was divided into 30 health districts, with the goal of comparing health markers geographically and establishing locally tailored health services in city-operated clinics. The first of these clinics, the Central Harlem Health Center, was opened on West 136th Street in 1930. However, the Great Depression slowed the process of building these health centers.

Another kind of experiment in public health came to fruition during Wynne's time as commissioner. A privately funded localized health clinic, one of three in the state, went up on the east side of Manhattan in 1924. The Bellevue-Yorkville Health Demonstration served as a way for the Department of Health to experiment with community health services without as many budget constraints. It offered a variety of medical and dental services for babies and school-aged children as well as treatment for tuberculosis, and served as an example of the type of neighborhood health care the Department was supporting.

The creation of the Department of Hospitals in 1930 further defined the Department of Health's mission. It took control of the city's public hospitals, allowing the health department to focus more on disease prevention than inpatient treatment. Wynne stepped up a diphtheria vaccine and awareness campaign, immunizing more than half a million children in two years. He also oversaw the Department as it handled an outbreak of polio in 1931 and continued to track maladies such as tuberculosis, venereal diseases, typhoid, and cancer.

Milk and food safety figured prominently among the Department's activities during Wynne's time as commissioner. The early to mid-1920s was marred by corruption in the milk and meat divisions of the Department. Wynne's Department attempted to resolve these issues and focused on ensuring the continued availability of safe milk to the whole city during the Depression years.

As commissioner, Wynne also focused on quality of life issues. During his tenure, the Department implemented a study on noise, making recommendations on how to lessen the din on city streets and subways. The Department monitored and investigated nuisances such as smoke, dogs, odors, rodents, and general city filth that was presumed to be unhealthy.

Wynne announced his retirement as health commissioner before Mayor Fiorello La Guardia took office and continued practicing as a physician and working with organizations that promoted child welfare, public health services, education, and the regulation of milk. He died in 1942.

Scope and Content: Sub-subgroup 1 consists primarily of correspondence between the Office of the Commissioner, divisions within the Department of Health, other city agencies, the Office of the Mayor, and nongovernmental agencies. It documents the Department's wide-ranging work on issues such as community-based health services, disease prevention, education, vaccinations, food and consumer product safety, quality of life, and health education. Much of the correspondence between city agencies originates from complaints or questions from the public on issues such as vaccinations, food, water and milk safety, noise, diet, and reported sanitary code violations.

These records contain not only correspondence, but reports, publications, promotional material, speeches, statistics, photographs, and Board of Health proceedings. There are also thousands of index cards used to cross-reference the Commissioner's correspondence and a small amount of blank survey materials and publications from the Federal Committee on the Cost of Medical Care.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup is arranged into three series, with Series 1 containing six subseries. Series 1 and 2 are organized alphabetically and then chronologically within that arrangement. Series 3 has no particular arrangement.

Processing Information: The material in Series 3 was housed loosely among material from Series I, Subseries 5 and did not appear to be part of an existing series.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 141342-141400 (Boxes 1.1-1.105, 1.118-1.134), 141416-141417 (Boxes 1.118-1.121), 141419-141424 (Boxes 1.106-1.117)

Series 1: Correspondence

Date(s): 1929-1933

Size (Extent): 60.5 cubic feet (121 boxes)

Arrangement: This series is arranged into six subseries: Subseries 1, Cooperating agencies (non-city government); Subseries 2, City departments; Subseries 3, Office of the Mayor; Subseries 4, Intra-agency; Subseries 5, Invitations; and Subseries 6, Arranged by subject.

Each of these is organized alphabetically and then chronologically within that arrangement. The correspondence in Subseries 1-4 is cross-referenced by subject in Subseries 6.

Series 2: Reference cards

Date(s): 1928-1933

Size (Extent): 6.5 cubic feet (13 boxes)

Series 3: Printed material

Date(s): 1929

Size (Extent): 0.5 cubic feet (1 box)

Sub-subgroup 2: John L. Rice, 1934-1942

121 cubic feet (242 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. John L. Rice served as commissioner of the Department of Health during most of Mayor Fiorello La Guardia's administration, from 1934 to 1942. Rice was born in Connecticut in 1887. He received an undergraduate degree from Wesleyan University in 1912, followed by a medical degree at Johns Hopkins University in 1917. He then worked on public health issues in Central America and the Caribbean for the Rockefeller Foundation's International Health Board. Before coming to the New York City Department of Health, Rice served as the health commissioner for New Haven, Connecticut for 10 years.

Rice's tenure was characterized first by streamlining in the face of the Great Depression and then expansion of the Department and services with the help of federal funds from New Deal agencies. Upon taking the title of commissioner, Rice restructured many departmental functions and staff. The austerity was short-lived, though, and Rice urged a return to previous budget levels thereafter.

The commissioner implemented several important administrative changes during his term that reflected new priorities for the Department. Once the responsibility of smaller units, the tuberculosis and social hygiene divisions were raised to bureau status. The latter indicated an increased focus on combatting and controlling venereal diseases. The Bureau of District Health Administration was established to administer the District Health Centers as they became an increasingly vital function of the Department. Rice hired three deputy commissioners, each with a different purview, and installed more professionals including full-time directors for each bureau.

The District Health Center program implemented under Commissioner Shirley W. Wynne was fast-tracked under Rice. Up from the seven health districts initially established in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan, the program was expanded to include 22 districts over the five boroughs. Federal Public Works Administration (PWA) funds paid for the construction of more than a dozen new health centers over Rice's term.

Federal funding also paid for a new Department of Health headquarters, laboratory, and child health stations. New Deal programs funded personnel to carry out mosquito control work and a citywide air pollution study as well as expanded health services at city clinics and District Health Centers.

Rice stepped down due to illness in July 1942, but stayed on as a deputy commissioner.

Scope and Content: This sub-subgroup predominately contains correspondence between Commissioner Rice and Department of Health staff, the people of New York City, the mayor, outside organizations and correspondence forwarded to the commissioner. The series also

contains ephemera, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, photographs, posters, publications, reports, and vital statistics records found in the relevant folder of correspondence.

Arrangement: The arrangement of this sub-subgroup reflects the order of the material in which it was found, organized according to the nature of the correspondence. The materials were intellectually arranged by year, followed by alphabetically according to folder title. Due to unexpected issues encountered during processing, some of the materials are not physically arranged in this way, but this does not affect accessibility as box numbers and locations have been meticulously recorded.

This sub-subgroup, comprised entirely of a correspondence series, has been organized into seven subseries: 1) Office of the Mayor; 2) Arranged by subject; 3) Invitations; 4) City departments; 5) Intra-agency; 6) District Health Centers; and 7) Cooperating agencies [non-city government].

Processing Information: The archivists followed the arrangement of the records as they were originally found and described them as they were labeled on the original folders. When folders were not labeled, the archivists devised folder titles keeping consistent with known original folder titles. Devised folder titles are written within brackets.

Materials from 1942 were found to contain some correspondence to or from the next commissioner (Ernest Lyman Stebbins; commissioner July 1942-March 1946). In keeping original order of the materials, Sub-subgroup 2 contains some Stebbins materials. This does not affect the accessibility of the materials as they have been kept in original order and described using the original folder title.

Subseries 3 primarily contains public complaints sent to the Office of the Mayor that were forwarded to the Department of Health. The mayor's office assigned a code consisting of numbers and letters to each piece of correspondence. These codes frequently appear as folder titles for this subseries. There is no documentation in this collection that explains the meaning of the codes.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 141401-141415 (Boxes 2.3-2.32), 141418 (Boxes 2.1, 2.2), 141425-141496 (Boxes 2.33-2.176), 141500 (Boxes 2.213, 2.214), 141503-141520 (Boxes 2.177-2.212), 141531-141541 (Boxes 2.219-2.242), 141543-141544 (Boxes 2.215-2.218)

Sub-subgroup 3: Ernest Stebbins, 1943-1945

32.5 cubic feet (65 boxes)

Biographical Note: Ernest Lyman Stebbins was born in Oelwein, Iowa in 1901. He received his B.S. from Dartmouth College, followed by his M.D. from Rush Medical College at the University of Chicago in 1929. After developing an interest in public health, he received his M.P.H. from Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health in 1932. From there on he led a life devoted to global public health. Though a significant New York City health commissioner, most of his professional life was spent at Johns Hopkins University. He was a professor from 1946 to 1958 and dean of the School of Hygiene and Public Health from 1958 to 1967. Once he retired in 1967, he was named emeritus professor and dean. Stebbins held many notable positions such as: the executive secretary of the World Federation of Public Health Associations, director of the American Cancer Society, expert advisor to the World Health Association. Commissioner Stebbins also served on the National Board of Governors of the American Red Cross.

During Stebbins' time as commissioner (July 1942-March 1946), the city was constricted by a meager budget due to World War II. The Department of Health had little more than a skeleton staff, yet significant progress was still made under Stebbins' leadership. The Bureau of Records began a massive project to convert all paper birth and death records into microfilm which were to be stored outside of New York City in case of an attack during World War II. Stebbins also began to educate the public on the importance of nutrition through the use of pamphlets and radio broadcasts. Some of the other innovations to the city's public health included: the development of a day care unit to assist mothers who were forced to care for their children alone while their husbands were at war, the production and administration of a pertussis vaccine, and the administration of physical exams to entrants of the public school system.

Stebbins passed away on April 30, 1987 at the age of 85. Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health awards the "Ernest Lyman Stebbins Medal" annually to a person who has made exceptional contributions to the school.

Scope and Content: Sub-subgroup 3 predominately contains correspondence between Commissioner Stebbins and Department of Health staff, the people of New York City, the mayor, outside organizations, and correspondence forwarded to the Commissioner. The series also contains ephemera, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, photographs, posters, publications, reports, and vital statistics records found in the relevant folder of correspondence. There are also monthly reports produced by bureau and divisions of the Department of Health. These reports were presented to the commissioner for inspection. The reports are predominately narrative with some statistics included.

Arrangement: Sub-subgroup 3 is divided into two series. Series 1 (Correspondence) is arranged into seven subseries according to the nature of the correspondence. The archivist left the materials as they were originally arranged with minimal reorganization to promote accessibility.

The materials are arranged in groupings by year, and then alphabetically within each year according to folder title.

Processing Information: Subseries 1 only contains correspondence from cooperating agencies from 1943 and 1944. Similar correspondence from 1945 was not found at time of processing.

Subseries 5 only includes invitations from 1943. Invitations created in 1944 and 1945 are arranged under subseries 6 (correspondence by subject). 1943 Invitations were found separated from the other materials, justifying a separate subseries, while 1944 and 1945 invitations were originally found organized with other correspondence arranged by subject.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 141569-141586 (Boxes 3.1-3.7, 3.28-3.30, 3.35-3.60), 141588-141589 (Boxes 3.31-3.34), 141602 (Box 3.65), 141605-141616 (Boxes 3.8-3.27, 3.61-3.64)

Series 1: Correspondence

Date(s): 1943-1945

Size (Extent): 31 cubic feet (62 boxes)

Arrangement: Series 1 series is arranged in seven subseries according to the nature of the correspondence: 1) Cooperating agencies [non-city government]; 2) City departments [city agencies]; 3) Office of the Mayor; 4) Intra-agency; 5) Invitations; 6) Arranged by subject; and 7) District Health Centers.

Series 2: Monthly reports

Date(s): 1943-1945

Size (Extent): 1.5 cubic feet (3 boxes)

Sub-subgroup 4-5: Edward Bernecker & Israel Weinstein, 1946-1947

19 cubic feet (38 boxes)

Biographical Note: New York City had four different health commissioners between 1946 and 1947, with one of them serving approximately one week. La Guardia's second commissioner of health, Dr. Ernest Stebbins, stepped down shortly after Mayor William O'Dwyer took office in 1946. The mayor enlisted the help of a search committee to pick Stebbins' successor, but then did not appoint one of the committee's candidates. In March, O'Dwyer appointed Dr. Edward Bernecker, head of the Department of Hospitals, despite objection from the Board of Health and groups such as the New York Academy of Medicine over his qualifications. Bernecker resigned just days later and O'Dwyer appointed Dr. Israel Weinstein, a bacteriologist who had been the head of the Department's Bureau of Public Health Education. Weinstein coordinated the Department's response to the threat of a smallpox outbreak in 1947, which included vaccinating millions of New Yorkers. Weinstein served until November 1947 when he stepped down as commissioner and returned to his previous position. O'Dwyer chose Dr. Harry S. Mustard to replace Weinstein.

Scope and Content: These records contain the health commissioners' correspondence with a variety of constituencies, from the mayor to individuals within the Department of Health and the general public. Contained within the correspondence are also reports, promotional material, charts and news clippings. The correspondence pertains to the daily operations of the Department as well as issues such as restaurant cleanliness and food handling, barbiturate prescription regulations, ragweed, air pollution and vaccinations, including rabies inoculations for dogs. The 1947 smallpox outbreak threat is well documented.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup is arranged into one correspondence series with four subseries: 1) Arranged by subject; 2) Intra-agency; 3) City departments [city agencies]; and 4) Cooperating agencies [non-city government]. Each subseries is organized chronologically and then alphabetically within that arrangement.

The material in Subseries 2 is mostly in its original order, with some alphabetical reorganization.

Processing Information: The material in this series spans four different commissioners. The records from 1946 and 1947 were processed in their entirety in a single sub-subgroup in keeping with the collection's original organization by calendar year.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 141545-141559 (Boxes 4-5.1 to 4-5.30, 141587 (Boxes 4-5.37 and 4-5.38), 141590-141593 (Boxes 4-5.31 to 4-5.36)

Sub-subgroup 6: Harry Mustard, 1947-1951, bulk 1948-1949

17.5 cubic feet (35 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. Harry Stoll Mustard (1889-1966) was born in Charleston, North Carolina. He received his medical degree from the Medical College of the State of South Carolina in 1911 and played a prominent role in the state of public health. He held academic positions at Vanderbilt University, University of Pennsylvania, New York University, and Columbia University. Some of his publications include *An Introduction to Public Health* (1935), *Rural Health Practice* (1936), and *Government in Public Health* (1946). Mustard was also published in numerous health journals. As a public servant, he held offices such as: scientific assistant and assistant surgeon for the United States Public Health Service, director of the Commonwealth Funds Child Health Administration in Tennessee and director of the Eastern Health District of Baltimore.

During Mustard's tenure as commissioner, he worked to strengthen ties with communities and their relevant health centers, as well as educate citizens on the topics of sexually transmitted diseases and air pollution. Mustard is most noted for advocating for the use of district health centers (including opening the Brownsville Health Center) within smaller communities and working to reduce the percentage of premature births. As an educator, he found that imparting knowledge to the general community was the strongest defense against prominent maladies.

One of his more controversial decisions as the health commissioner was limiting the number of dogs that could reside in a single household. He also moved to ban bathing on city beaches due to sewage leaks, until proper sewage disposal plants could be constructed.

Mustard died at the age of 77 after suffering a stroke in 1966.

Scope and Content: Sub-subgroup 6 predominately contains correspondence between the commissioner and the Department of Health, other city departments, and outside health organizations. Throughout the correspondence, a plethora of other materials can be found including photographs, journals, fliers, pamphlets, reports, posters, and booklets. There are also minutes from meetings of the Board of Health and its respective bureaus. Other materials housed with the meeting minutes include correspondence, speech transcriptions, and legislation to be discussed at the relevant meeting.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup is arranged into two series. The correspondence is arranged into 5 series, according to the nature of the correspondence. Each subseries is arranged chronologically, followed by alphabetically by folder title.

Processing Information: The materials have been organized in the manner that they were originally received by the Municipal Archives. Original folder titles have been retained. Some materials were removed for preservation reasons and are stored in oversized boxes. Minimal rearrangement of the folders was performed and folder titles were devised by the archivist

when materials were found loose. A small amount of material dates from outside Mustard's time as commissioner but seem to have been used by him for reference purposes.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 141521-141529 (Boxes 6.1-6.18), 141560-141568 (Boxes 6.19-6.35)

Series 1: Correspondence

Date(s): 1916, 1947-1951, bulk 1948-1949

Size (Extent): 16.5 cubic feet (33 boxes)

Arrangement: Series 1 series is arranged into five subseries: 1) Arranged by subject; 2) City departments [city agencies]; 3) Intra-agency; 4) District Health Centers; and 5) Cooperating agencies [non-city government].

Series 2: Meeting materials

Date(s): 1948-1950

Size (Extent): 1 cubic foot (2 boxes)

Sub-subgroup 7: John F. Mahoney, 1950-1953

26 cubic feet (52 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. John Friend Mahoney served as health commissioner from 1950 to 1953. He was appointed at the end of Mayor O'Dwyer's administration and stayed on under Mayor Vincent Impellitteri. Mahoney had been head of the federal Venereal Disease Laboratory on Staten Island for 20 years before assuming the helm of the city's Department of Health. It was there he developed a penicillin treatment for venereal disease that decreased treatment time.

Mahoney's tenure saw the ramping up of emergency preparedness in case of a nuclear attack on the city or state. The Department of Health established and operated first-aid stations throughout the city together with the Department of Hospitals. A specialized division was created for this purpose. In 1952, the mayor created the Interdepartmental Health Council to coordinate overlapping activities across the health, hospitals, and welfare departments. Other administrative changes included the Division for Crippled Children becoming a full-fledged departmental bureau and the reorganization of the Bureau of Sanitary Engineering. The Department of Health also created units to respond to issues such as carbon monoxide poisonings, rats, radiation, and the conditions of day camps for children.

During this time the Department suffered a personnel shortage and high turnover due to its inability to offer health professionals competitive salaries. The Department came under criticism from outside organizations such as the New York Academy of Medicine and the American Public Health Association, both of whom conducted detailed evaluations. According to these groups, the Department fell short in multiple areas.

After his tenure he returned to lab work, heading the Department's Bureau of Laboratories. He served in that position until he died in 1957.

Scope and Content: This sub-subgroup contains Commissioner Mahoney's correspondence with city agencies, other staff in the Department, and related outside groups who worked alongside the Department. The material includes reports, publications, and statistics as well as promotional and educational material. The records in this series notably address subjects such as civil defense, narcotics abuse, fluoridation of the city's water supply, Puerto Rican migration, the Department's growing focus on mental hygiene, and new treatments for polio and tuberculosis. There is also material related to Mahoney's work with the World Health Organization. This material consists of reports, press releases, correspondence, memos and statistics.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup, comprised entirely of a correspondence series, has been organized into four subseries: 1) Arranged by subject; 2) Cooperating agencies [non-city government]; 3) City departments [city agencies]; and 4) Intra-agency.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 141593-141604 (Boxes 7.1-7.23), 141626-141640 (Boxes 7.24-7.52)

Sub-subgroup 8: Leona Baumgartner, 1946-1962, bulk 1954-1962

113.5 cubic feet (227 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. Leona Baumgartner was the first woman to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Health for New York City. She held that office from 1954 to 1962 under Mayor Robert F. Wagner. Baumgartner's tenure at the Department of Health began in 1937 when she joined the Department as a child hygiene instructor. She was appointed director of the Bureau of Child Hygiene in 1942 and assistant commissioner in 1949. She held positions outside city government in between those roles with the Department. These included executive director of the New York Foundation and president of the American Public Health Association.

In 1954, Baumgartner successfully lobbied for New York City to be part of nationwide testing of a new polio vaccine. Once the Salk vaccine passed the testing phase, the Department of Health successfully administered the Salk polio vaccine to millions of New York City residents, effectively eliminating the public health threat the disease had posed for decades. The Department turned the campaign into a systematic vaccination program for school-age children.

Building on the work of previous commissioners, Baumgartner used popular media to communicate public health information to the populace. She elevated these efforts by utilizing television for the first time, appearing frequently on national television to millions of viewers.

Baumgartner decentralized the Department by creating director positions for each borough. She also increased focus on community and district services as well as personnel training and education, establishing new divisions and offices to serve these purposes. The Health Research Council was created to gear funds towards innovations in various public health areas.

Increased overall quality of life and life expectancy as well as advances in treating communicable diseases turned the Department's attention to chronic illnesses and underlying problems such as quality of elder health care, nutrition and the link between poverty and health. To address the latter, the mayor convened a Task Force on Health Services with representatives from the Departments of Health, Hospitals, and Welfare to coordinate services for welfare recipients.

Baumgartner left the Department of Health in 1962 to become Assistant Administrator of the Agency for International Development, a new agency created by President John F. Kennedy.

Scope and Content: Sub-subgroup 8 documents Department activities such as coordinating and implementing the vaccination of millions of New Yorkers against polio, revising the Sanitary Code, public health education efforts and administrative reorganization. Materials highlight the Department's increasing work on mental health, alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, contraception, accidental poisonings, in-home accidents, and juvenile delinquency during these years. There are also records pertaining to Baumgartner's advocacy for water fluoridation and

successful campaign to remove the race category from newly issued birth certificates. The Commissioner's trips to India and the Soviet Union in an official advisory capacity are also detailed.

Series 1 consists of correspondence, press releases, reports, memos, statistics and news clippings, with some invitations, ephemera, and photographs. Series 2 contains files related to major Board of Health activities including the 1958-1959 revision of the Health Code, establishment of expiration dates for milk and outlawing of gas refrigerators. It also includes minutes, resolutions and reports as well as memos, addresses and clippings.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup is arranged into two series. The correspondence series has five subseries, based on correspondent. Each subseries is organized chronologically and then alphabetically within that arrangement. Series 2: Board of Health Subject Files is organized alphabetically.

Processing Information: The material in Series 1, Subseries 4 is mostly in its original order, with some alphabetical reorganization. Material related to the Community Mental Health Board, a precursor to the Department of Mental Hygiene, were filed inconsistently throughout the collection, with either intra-agency records or records from other city agencies. They can be found in both Subseries 2 and 4 in the processed collection.

The records in Series 2 were housed separately from the commissioner's correspondence. Some predate Baumgartner's tenure as commissioner but were filed along with similar material from her term. This material has been kept together in the processed sub-subgroup. Much of the material in this series was loose and so the folder titles have been created by the archivist in many cases. These are represented using brackets. Assigned Board of Health case numbers are included in the folder titles in instances where the number appeared on a significant portion of the documents.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 141497-141499 (Boxes 8.220-8.225), 141501-141502 (Boxes 8.216-8.219), 141542 (Boxes 8.226, 8.227), 141617-141625 (Boxes 8.2-8.19), 141628 (Box 8.1), 141641-141703 (Boxes 8.20-8.112, 8.116-8.148), 141896-141928 (Boxes 8.149-8.160, 8.162-8.214), 141950 (Box 8.215), 141979 (Box 8.113), 142022 (Boxes 8.114, 8.115)

[Series 1: Correspondence](#)

Date(s): 1954-1962

Size (Extent): 112.5 cubic feet (225 boxes)

Arrangement: Series 1 series is arranged into five subseries: 1) Arranged by subject; 2) Intra-agency; 3) Cooperating agencies [non-city government]; 4) City departments [city agencies]; and 5) Office of the Mayor.

[Series 2: Board of Health subject files](#)

Date(s): 1946-1962

NYC Municipal Archives

Guide to the records of the Health Commissioners, 1928-1991

Size (Extent): 1 cubic foot (2 boxes)

Sub-subgroup 9: George James, 1963-1965

58.5 cubic feet (117 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. George James served as Commissioner from the end of 1962 to 1965 after turns as deputy commissioner and first deputy commissioner under Commissioner Baumgartner. James was previously the commissioner of health for Akron, Ohio and worked for the New York State Department of Health. As commissioner of the New York City Department of Health, James continued many of his predecessor's efforts and policies while launching programs confronting issues such as smoking and birth control for the first time.

One of the largest projects undertaken by the city during James' tenure was the fluoridation of the city's water supply. The debate over fluoridation had lasted years but found enough public and official support to become realized in 1965. The Department also moved towards offering ambulatory care at its health centers and opened an emergency clinic for children in Brooklyn to ease hospital overcrowding. A new measles vaccine was integrated into schoolchildren's vaccine regimen.

Family planning and birth control received major attention during James' administration. With the help of federal funds, the city opened maternal and family planning clinics in several hospitals in the fall of 1964. It was the first time the Department offered birth control information and devices. James was also the city's first health commissioner to advocate for putting warning labels on cigarettes and clinics to help smokers quit. These initiatives were not realized but James emphasized the danger of cigarettes by tying the city's lung cancer deaths to smoking in his reports.

The Department worked closely with the departments of Welfare and Hospitals via a new Commission of Health Services, comprised of the top officials of the three departments. The commission worked primarily on health services for the poor and elderly. In 1963 the Department of Health assumed control over the medical division of the Department of Correction.

James resigned in October 1965 to become Dean of the new Mount Sinai Medical School. First Deputy Commissioner John Philp headed the department until succeeding Mayor John Lindsay appointed his own commissioner.

Scope and Content: These records contain Commissioner James' correspondence with colleagues in the Department of Health, city agencies, non-governmental civic and advocacy groups as well as reports, statistics, news clippings and press releases. The materials document the Department's work on issues such as mental health, smoking, cancer, poison awareness, tuberculosis, nutrition, family planning, pollution and nursing homes. The Department's collaborative work with the Mayor's Commission on Health Services is also represented.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup, comprised entirely of a correspondence series, has been organized into seven subseries: 1) Cooperating agencies [non-city government]; 2) City departments [city agencies]; 3) Office of the Mayor; 4) Intra-agency; 5) City boards; and 6) Arranged by subject. Each subseries is organized chronologically and then alphabetically within that arrangement.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 141929-141976 (Boxes 9.1-9.95), 141989-141990 (Boxes 9.114-9.117), 141992-142000 (Boxes 9.96-9.113)

Sub-subgroup 10: John R. Philp, Arthur Bushel, and Howard Junior Brown, 1966

12.5 cubic feet (25 boxes)

Biographical Note: Mayor John Lindsay consolidated the city's agencies into "superagencies" upon taking office. The Health Services Administration was created (first by executive order, then formally by legislation in 1967) as an umbrella agency to coordinate and reduce costs and duplication of work by the Department of Health, Department of Hospitals, Community Mental Health Board and the Chief Medical Examiner's Office. The HSA would have a single administrator at the top.

John Philp, who succeeded Commissioner George James under Mayor Wagner, briefly served as commissioner until Lindsay took office. Lindsay then appointed Arthur Bushel for the role while he reorganized city agencies. In July 1966 the mayor chose Howard Junior Brown as both commissioner of the Department of Health and health services administrator, but the dual role was short lived. In the fall of 1966 the Board of Health decided one person should not occupy both jobs simultaneously. Brown continued as health services administrator and a new health commissioner was brought on in February 1967.

Facing the uncertainties of reorganization, staffing shortages and budget cuts, the Department continued its work. In March 1966, the Department opened its first ambulatory care clinic, in Brooklyn, continuing its focus on that type of service. Lindsay put a freeze on filling city job vacancies, which, along with lagging salaries, led to staffing shortages. A contract dispute with doctors threatened a strike and another with the Department's public health nurses in May led nearly all of them to walk off the job for three days. For much of 1966 it was unclear how autonomous the Department of Health would remain under Lindsay's superagency plan. Department administrators and allies pushed back on efforts to blur the boundaries between departments under the HSA, especially the Department of Hospitals.

Scope and Content: Sub-subgroup 10 contains the records of three officeholders in two different positions. John Philp and Arthur Bushel were acting commissioners in 1966. Howard Junior Brown briefly served as both health commissioner and head of the Health Services Administration. The records from both Brown's positions are in this sub-subgroup. The material consists of correspondence, memos, reports and statistics, typed remarks and notes delivered by Howard Junior Brown, in his dual roles of commissioner and head of the Health Services Administration, at various events. Some relate to city hospitals, which were the purview of the HSA. This is also a separate small set of Brown's personal and professional correspondence. It contains letters of congratulations on Brown's appointment to city government and personal correspondence with colleagues.

The sub-subgroup highlights the Department's increased focus on ambulatory care, narcotics addiction and health in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. There is also material related to the Department's centennial anniversary as well as records documenting the city's

engagement with the federal government on Medicare and Medicaid, which were rolled out that year. Brown's records from his role as health services administrator document the beginnings of the HSA, the administration of the city's hospitals and the implementation of Medicare and Medicaid.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup is arranged into four series depending on the nature of the records. This arrangement is in keeping with how the files were housed.

Series 1 is arranged by correspondent and then alphabetically.

Unique to this set of records are a grouping of files from the office of the Health Services Administrator. For a few months, the Commissioner of the Department of Health was also the head of the umbrella agency that encompassed the department. The records from this single officeholder's two positions are found in this sub-subgroup.

Series 2 is organized by date, while Series 3 is organized alphabetically. This reflects how these files were originally found.

The subseries within Series 4 were created by the archivist to reflect the way the files were grouped.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 141977-141988 (Boxes 10.3-10.25), 141991 (Boxes 10.1, 10.2)

Series 1: Correspondence

Date(s): 1966

Size (Extent): 9 cubic feet (18 boxes)

Arrangement: Series 1 series is arranged into five subseries: 1) Arranged by subject; 2) Cooperating agencies [non-city government]; 3) City departments [city agencies]; 4) Intra-agency; and 5) Office of the Mayor.

Series 2: Commissioner's talks

Date(s): 1966

Size (Extent): 0.5 cubic feet (2 boxes)

Series 3: Commissioner Howard Brown files

Date(s): 1966

Size (Extent): 0.5 cubic feet (1 box)

Series 4: Health Services Administrator records

Date(s): 1966

Size (Extent): 2.5 cubic feet (5 boxes)

Arrangement: Series 4 series is arranged into three subseries depending on the type of material: 1) Administrative files; 2) Subject files; and 3) Office of the Mayor.

Sub-subgroup 11: Edward O'Rourke, 1967-1969

38.5 cubic feet (77 boxes)

Biographical Note: In 1967, Dr. Edward O'Rourke took leave from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to take on the role of New York City Health Commissioner. He had spent much of his career at federal agencies, including the Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General and USAID. He had previously taught epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health.

O'Rourke arrived when the role of the New York City Department of Health was in flux given Mayor John Lindsay's establishment of the Health Services Administration (HSA) superagency the previous year. The move put the Department under an umbrella agency alongside the Department of Hospitals and Office of the Medical Examiner. In the preceding years, the Department had been moving toward providing ambulatory services at its district health centers, but funding related to the HSA, Medicaid, and other Great Society legislation stunted that trend.

Federal and state law mandated the Department of Health take on a major new role administering Medicaid. It became responsible for setting standards of patient service that would be reimbursed by a government program and monitoring quality of service. The first year of the program, the city had enrolled more than 25 percent of New Yorkers, or 2.2 million people.

At the same time, the city was also undergoing major demographic, social, and socio-economic changes that had been under way for years. White flight and the migration of African-Americans and Puerto Ricans into the city transformed the population the Department served and brought new issues to the fore. Many of the challenges O'Rourke found were closely related to poverty, including lead poisoning, narcotics addiction, and lack of health services in neighborhoods deemed "slums." Meanwhile, the district health centers were falling into disrepair and the Department suffered staffing shortages. Teenage drug use was on the rise and venereal disease cases hit a 20-year high. O'Rourke also prioritized birth control services with the formation of the Bureau of Maternity Services and Family Planning.

Labor disputes with health impacts punctuated O'Rourke's tenure. A sanitation workers strike and resulting pile-up of garbage in the streets in February 1968 prompted the Board of Health to declare a health emergency for the first time in three decades, and warned residents of typhoid. At the end of the year, fuel deliverers went on strike and hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers went without heat during a very cold winter and bad flu season. The Board of Health declared the city was in a "state of peril," and the Department mobilized to check on residents in heatless buildings and procure more flu vaccines. O'Rourke officially attributed three deaths to the three-week heating crisis.

The Department's state counterpart became increasingly involved in city health matters, as it was responsible for Medicaid funding and sought to remedy New York City's broken hospital system. In 1969, the state tried to exert control over the city's Department of Health through legislation. Department of Health staff was also involved in crafting the state's legislation to legalize abortion.

O'Rourke stepped down at the end of June 1969 to become Dean of the School of Public Health at the University of Hawaii.

Scope and Content: The bulk of the material in this sub-subgroup is correspondence. It documents the commissioner's communications with Department staff, other city departments as well as public health-related nonprofits and state and federal agencies. The material spans 1967 to 1969 and represents the Department's work on issues such as narcotics abuse and methadone treatment, air and water pollution, venereal diseases and smoking. The Department's reorganization under the Health Services Administration is well documented in this series as is its relationship with its state counterpart and the Department of Hospitals. There are also records related to establishment of the Health and Hospitals Corporation. Materials include correspondence, reports, promotional materials, press releases and statistical analyses.

There is also a series of drafts and final copies of speeches or statements delivered by Commissioner O'Rourke at conferences, governmental hearings and other events. Additional material from those events can also be found. Two of the folders in this series contain speeches given by other Department officials, including Mary McLaughlin, who succeeded O'Rourke as commissioner. There is also a list of events where McLaughlin spoke in 1969 as commissioner and the titles of those remarks.

There is a wealth of material related to the Department of Health's administration and auditing of Medicaid. It includes informational material from the federal and state governments, correspondence between the commissioner and doctors, health administrators, pharmacists and other parties involved in Medicaid. The Department's standards for Medicaid participants are included as are memos and publicity materials illustrating how the Department informed the public about enrollment and how the program worked.

Arrangement: Sub-subgroup 11 is arranged into three series according to the nature of the material: 1) Correspondence; 2) Commissioner's talks; and 3) Medicaid and Medicare. The correspondence series is further organized into five subseries according to correspondent.

Series 2 is organized chronologically. Series 3 has no discernible organization scheme, so the order in which it was previously housed has been retained.

Processing Information: The material in Series 3 related to Medicaid were originally unfolded for the most part and so the arrangement of this series reflects the order they were found in the original boxes.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 142001-142021 (Boxes 11.5-11.46), 142023-142033 (Boxes 11.1-11.4, 11.47-11.64), 142232 (Box 11.77), 142235-142240 (Boxes 11.65-11.76)

Series 1: Correspondence

Date(s): 1967-1969

Size (Extent): 34 cubic feet (68 boxes)

Arrangement: The correspondence series is further organized into five subseries according to correspondent: 1) Arranged by subject; 2) Intra-agency; 3) City departments [city agencies]; 4) Cooperating agencies [non-city government]; and 5) Office of the Mayor.

Series 2: Commissioner's talks

Date(s): 1967-1969

Size (Extent): 1.5 cubic feet (3 boxes)

Series 3: Medicaid and Medicare

Date(s): 1967-1968

Size (Extent): 2.25 cubic feet (5 boxes)

Sub-subgroup 12: Mary McLaughlin, 1970

18 cubic feet (36 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. Mary McLaughlin had worked for the Department of Health for nearly 20 years when Mayor John Lindsay elevated her to the commissioner post in mid-1969. McLaughlin started in the Department as a resident trainee in 1947 before earning her advanced degrees from Columbia University and New York University. She then rejoined the Department of Health as a district health officer in 1954 and became the Department's Director for that borough five years later. She also served as assistant commissioner for professional and community health services and associate deputy commissioner.

The Department continued to be plagued by budget cuts when McLaughlin took office. It cut back on clinic hours and the school health program, among other services, and staff wages stagnated, but was able to focus funds to the city's most acute problems. These included narcotics addiction, lead poisoning, abortion, and venereal diseases.

Heroin addiction in New York City was nearing epidemic status during this period. Mayor Lindsay tried to tackle the issue as a health problem and a crime problem. McLaughlin was tasked with designing a citywide program to administer methadone to addicts. She also proposed a Bureau of Drug Addiction within the Department of Health, but Lindsay decided to create a specialized agency for this function at the mayoral level. The Lindsay administration experimented with various solutions that only sometimes involved the Department of Health. Between the mayor's Addiction Services Agency and the Health Services Administration, the Department of Health was given varying levels of control over the methadone program, though it was administered out of the district health centers. Efforts to fight drug addiction were also continually hampered by funding.

The Department of Health was instrumental in the implementation of abortion services in the city when the state legalized the procedure in July 1970. Dr. Jean Pakter, head of the bureau of maternity services and family planning, headed the group of experts that drafted abortion guidelines for the city. These guidelines dictated where, when, and how abortions could be performed and who was authorized to perform them. Initially, Department guidelines limited abortions to hospitals, but the regulations that ultimately passed the Board of Health allowed them in clinics as well. Private doctors were not allowed to perform abortions in their offices. The regulations also mandated recordkeeping on patients. The Department launched an awareness and education campaign as the law went into effect.

Lead poisoning had been a growing concern among health officials for years due to the ballooning problem of dilapidated housing in poorer parts of the city. McLaughlin took active measures during her tenure as public outcry increased. She created a Bureau of Lead Poisoning Control and diverted funds from other programs to ramp up testing of children in high risk neighborhoods. McLaughlin also secured changes to the Health Code that gave the Department power to require landlords to clean up lead paint.

Venereal disease was on the rise during this period, when only a decade before health officials had more control over the situation. The Health Services Administration allocated an additional \$500,000 so the Department could reopen venereal disease clinics on weekends, employ case-finders to locate disease carriers, and open additional clinics. Rodents, high-rise window fatalities, and other problems related to inadequately regulated housing conditions proliferated as well. In 1971, the Department of Health took over medical and mental health care for inmates in city jails.

McLaughlin served until early 1972, when she became the commissioner of the Suffolk County Department of Health Services. She passed away in 2014.

Scope and Content: Sub-subgroup 12 contains Commissioner McLaughlin's records from 1970. It includes correspondence within the Department of Health, city government, and outside organizations. The material relates to topics such as narcotics addiction and methadone programs, abortion services and the legislation that legalized the procedures, air pollution, lead poisoning, nutrition, and rats. There is extensive material related to the Health Services Administration umbrella agency and the advisory committee for the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services, which had just been created. There is also material related to the passage and implementation of the legalization of abortion in New York State. These records include several versions of the abortion guidelines proposed for the city's Health Code, weekly statistical reports and related correspondence and memos. There are also official statements from a variety of public health and community groups for and against Article 42 of the Health Code. This provision further defined where and how abortions could be performed within New York City. The records include statistical reports, correspondence, memos, minutes, invitations, and publications.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup is arranged in two series: 1) Correspondence; and 2) Abortion legislation. The correspondence series is further divided into five subseries according to the nature of the correspondence.

Series 2 was housed with no particular arrangement and that order has been maintained. These documents were housed separately from the commissioner's correspondence and therefore constitute their own series.

The original folder titles in Subseries 2 reflect groupings of functions used to organize the Department's bureaus under assistant commissioners. These folder titles were maintained and the folders have been arranged alphabetically using those titles. For example: the Bureau of Food and Drugs and Bureau of Sanitary Engineering fall under the Department's Environmental Health Services designation.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 142232-142234 (Boxes 12.1-12.5), 142247 (Box 12.36), 142250-142264 (Boxes 12.6-12.12.35)

Series 1: Correspondence

Date(s): 1970

Size (Extent): 17 cubic feet (34 boxes)

Arrangement: The correspondence series is further organized into five subseries according to correspondent: 1) Arranged by subject; 2) Intra-agency; 3) City departments [city agencies]; 4) Cooperating agencies [non-city government]; and 5) Office of the Mayor.

Series 2: Abortion legislation

Date(s): 1970

Size (Extent): 1 cubic foot (3 boxes)

Sub-subgroup 13: Joseph Anthony Cimino, 1973

7.5 cubic feet (15 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. Joseph A. Cimino was appointed health commissioner by Mayor John Lindsay in 1972 and served until 1974. Previously, Cimino served as chief medical officer of the Department of Sanitation where he championed new equipment and techniques to cut down on the high rate of injury suffered by sanitation workers. He went on to be chief medical consultant for the Civil Service Commission, and director of the Poison Control Center, bringing with him a propensity for statistical analysis and problem-solving.

Although Cimino's tenure as commissioner was plagued by budgetary constraints due to the city's looming fiscal insolvency and ongoing battles with the newly created Health Services Administration, he was able to continue many of the Department's more successful programs. This included maintaining free immunization programs for polio and other diseases at the city's child health centers, a hallmark of previous administrations. Due to new testing techniques discovered by the Department, Cimino was able to expand services for venereal disease testing for women across the five boroughs. He was also credited with strengthening regulations and instituting environmental sanitation policies related to the food service industry, which had long been lacking. In 1973, it was his actions as health commissioner that helped mitigate shortfalls in medicine and care to city hospitals during a strike by hospital workers.

Dr. Cimino left in 1974 to become the commissioner and director of Westchester County Health Services. He passed away in 2007.

Scope and Content: Sub-subgroup 13 contains records documenting Commissioner Cimino's role in the Department of Health, Health and Hospitals Corporation and work with the Health Services Administration during 1973. The files pertaining to the Department of Health focus on maternal and child health, commissioner meetings, sanitary inspections, school health, and statistics on reportable diseases. This group of records contains communications between Cimino and Health Services Administrator Gordon Chase and HSA staff. The HHC material covers Cimino's time as a member and occasional chairman of the board. It deals with the fiscal health of the agency, and refers to costs, invoices, and services for both the corporation as a whole and specific hospitals. There is also material related to medical and professional affairs, community relations, personnel, and legislative issues facing the corporation. By and large the material refers to general operational issues, though much of the discussion is dominated by the financial crisis. This sub-subgroup contains correspondence, memos, and reports as well as newsletters.

Arrangement: Sub-subgroup 13 is organized into three series: 1) Subject files; 2) Health Services Administration subject files; and 3) Health and Hospitals Corporation chronological files.

Processing Information: Series 1 is missing subject files A-L, and possibly the beginning of letter M. In both Series 1 and 2, the materials related to Medicaid and Health Services Administration were originally unfolded so the arrangement of this series reflects the order in which they were originally found.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 142241-142242 (Boxes 13.12-13.15), 142244-142249 (Boxes 13.1-13.11)

[Series 1: Subject files](#)

Date(s): 1973

Size (Extent): 2.5 cubic feet (5 boxes)

[Series 2: Health Services Administration subject files](#)

Date(s): 1973

Size (Extent): 1.5 cubic feet (3 boxes)

[Series 3: Health and Hospitals Corporation chronological files](#)

Date(s): 1973

Size (Extent): 3.5 cubic feet (7 boxes)

Sub-subgroup 14: Lowell E. Bellin, 1974-1977

9 cubic feet (18 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. Lowell Bellin was appointed as New York City's chief health officer in 1974 by Mayor Abraham Beame. In addition to his role as commissioner of the Department of Health, he held the titles of chairman of the Board of Health, chairman of the Health and Hospitals Corporation, acting administrator of the Health Services Administration, and chairman of the Comprehensive Health Planning Agency. Prior to these he was director of the city's Medicaid program and first deputy health commissioner under Mayor John Lindsay.

Before becoming commissioner, Bellin led the charge against Medicaid fraud as director of the city's Medicaid program and as first deputy health commissioner under the Lindsay administration. He continued this approach as commissioner by vigorously enforcing the laws against those who sought to abuse the system for financial gain. While Bellin supported Medicaid, its creation greatly influenced his management of the city's health systems, particularly with the regards to the Health and Hospitals Corporation. The city's financial crisis prompted Mayor Beame to request layoffs of 500 HHC staff. Believing that Medicaid would allow the city to reduce its financial support for the 19 publicly-funded hospitals, Bellin agreed in theory with Beame's request and commissioned numerous reports to determine the feasibility of closing a number of the hospitals. This put him in direct confrontation with John Holloman, president of the HHC. As most of the hospitals and jobs affected would fall upon the poorest communities, as well as those of the black and Latino communities, Holloman argued for an alternative approach. The disagreement spread into the newspapers and served to inflame tensions across the city. Issues related to these closures would dominate the rest of Bellin's administration.

Federal budget cuts, a national recession, and the city's looming fiscal insolvency loomed over Bellin's tenure as commissioner. This resulted in larger and larger requests from Beame for cuts to services and staff. In order to mitigate the damage Bellin, and his team used three principles to guide their decisions: "life-preserving" functions, such as vaccinations, were prioritized over "life-enhancing" functions; programs targeted for downsizing were kept staffed with a core of trained professionals in order to keep a modicum of effectiveness; programs that could be cut were those that had analogous representation in the private sector. Bellin was also adept at finding creative ways to keep important programs in place. Whether that meant amending the Health Code to require landlords to install window guards or subcontracting programs out to non-profits, he worked diligently to stop the city from reversing course on decades of positive progress.

In the fall of 1976, Bellin left the agency to return to his position as professor at Columbia School of Public Health, with his first deputy commissioner, Dr. Pascal Imperato, taking his place. He later became an adviser to Mayor Ed Koch and served on the faculties of the New York University School of Public Administration and the State University of New York Health Science Center in Brooklyn.

Scope and Content: Sub-subgroup 14 contains records documenting Bellin's roles as health commissioner and chair of the Health and Hospitals Corporation, but also includes some material relating to his advocacy activities outside city government. Records pertaining to HHC detail its week-to-week operations and meetings with the Board of Directors and are from 1975. While the majority of the material is tied to the financial crisis, the issue of sterilization and its relation to poorer communities is one of the most heavily featured topics. The rest of the material focuses on the budget, the nursing shortage, the bed shortage, layoffs, and the possible closing of 19 hospitals across the five boroughs. Also included is material related to the public disagreement with Dr. John L.S. Holloman, president of HHC.

There are also drafts and final copies of speeches or statements delivered by Commissioner Bellin at conferences, governmental hearings, and other events, with much of the subject matter duplicated in his published papers. The speeches and paper mainly address public health and public health administration, but also represent his work on the recently implemented Professional Standards Review Organization (PSRO) and the role of the Jewish community in the public health sector.

Bellin's records also include subject files from 1974-1977, but they are incomplete. These files include correspondence, newspaper clippings, memos, and reports from other agencies and departments, as well as issues important to the commissioner, such as the dispute with Dr. John Holloman and the imprisonment of Dr. Mikhail Shtern in the Soviet Union. Other files focus on fiscal affairs, Health and Hospitals Corporation, the Integrated Financial Management System and the Bureau of Laboratories. Due to the gaps in the files there is a lack of in-depth material on any one subject.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup is organized into four series, according to Bellin's positions in city government and the nature of the records. Three of these are further divided into subseries.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 142280-142288 (Boxes 14.1-14.18)

[Series 1: Health and Hospitals Corporation](#)

Date(s): 1975

Size (Extent): 2.5 cubic feet (5 boxes)

Arrangement: Series 1 is organized into three subseries based on the nature of the material: 1) Chronological files; 2) Board of Directors meetings; and 3) Hospital profiles and studies.

[Series 2: Commissioner's talks and papers](#)

Date(s): 1974-1975

Size (Extent): 2 cubic feet (4 boxes)

Arrangement: The commissioner's speech drafts and notes and published papers have been divided into two subseries: 1) Commissioner's talks; and 2) Commissioner's papers.

Series 3: Correspondence

Date(s): 1974-1975

Size (Extent): 1.5 cubic feet (3 boxes)

Arrangement: The series has been divided into two subseries: 1) Professional correspondence; and 2) Personal correspondence.

Series 4: Subject files

Date(s): 1974-1977

Size (Extent): 3 cubic feet (6 boxes)

Sub-subgroup 15: Reinaldo Antonio Ferrer, 1977-1981

57.5 cubic feet (105 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. Reinaldo Ferrer was Mayor Ed Koch's first Health Commissioner, serving from 1978 to 1981. He was born in Puerto Rico and received degrees from St. Louis University School of Medicine in 1945 and Columbia University in 1962. He held positions in public health in both Puerto Rico and in Washington, D.C. before coming to New York. Ferrer was associate director of Beth Israel Medical Center immediately preceding his appointment to head the Department of Health.

Ferrer presided over a turbulent and troubled time for the Department, as the city was trying to recover from its financial crisis. As one of the board members of the Health and Hospitals Corporation, Ferrer was instrumental in controversial hospital closings during his tenure. During the financial crisis, the city decided to close several public hospitals it deemed underused in order to save much-needed funds. These hospitals tended to be in black and Latino neighborhoods. When Mayor Ed Koch took office, he added Sydenham and Metropolitan hospitals to the chopping block, both in Harlem. The Department, and Ferrer in particular, came under fire from community activists and residents in the form of extended protests and sit-ins. The governor became involved and discussions went back and forth, but Sydenham was ultimately closed. Metropolitan was spared.

In these years, the Department was providing minimal services due to drastic budget and staffing cuts. The school health, lead poisoning, restaurant inspection, venereal disease control and Medicaid reimbursement programs had all been scaled back. When there was a resurgence of measles among school-aged children in the 1970s, federal health officials worked to improve school vaccination programs nationwide. The city's Department of Health joined the effort and worked with the Board of Education to determine which students had gone unvaccinated and provide them with those vaccines. The Department set up emergency vaccination clinics at the start of the school year in the late 1970s and early 1980s, lowering the incidence rate of measles significantly.

Ferrer led the Department during the emergence of Legionnaire's Disease. Departmental staff were essential to tracking down the source of an outbreak to a water tower in Manhattan in 1978. An oil spill off the Rockaways closed down beaches in Queens and Brooklyn in August 1978. The Department also began a public education campaign to conserve water during a drought in 1980. The city also stepped up regulations of mobile food vendors in this period.

The city had turned over some health department functions to the state in order to reduce spending. This continued under Ferrer, who handed over operation of the city's methadone clinics to the state. The state also tried to take over the collection of vital statistics, but was thwarted.

Ferrer stepped down in 1981 to care for his wife, who was unwell, and returned to Puerto Rico. He took up a public health post there before retiring in 1994. Ferrer died in 1998.

Scope and Content: Commissioner Ferrer's files include internal, intra-city government, and topic-related correspondence and files from the commissioner's office. Unlike in previous sub-subgroups, all of these records were stored together, without distinction as to the type of correspondent. The records are from 1978 to 1981, but are incomplete. There are a sizeable number of records on the functions of the Health and Hospitals Corporation and Health Services Administration. There is documentation on hospital closings, new window guard requirements to prevent falling deaths as well as the Department's investigation into a Legionnaire's disease outbreak in 1978 and new immunization requirements for school children, among regular business. The records consist of correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, publications and appointment books.

Materials designated "reading files" contain commissioners' replies to health-related correspondence sent by the public to the Department or forwarded from the Office of the Mayor. Sometimes follow-up documents are included. Complaints range from housing conditions and restaurant cleanliness to stray animals, pets, and vermin. There is also correspondence between outgoing Commissioner Ferrer, incoming Commissioner David Sencer, and their colleagues.

Series 3 contains records related to the construction of a coal-powered energy plant on Staten Island proposed by the State of New York in the early 1970s through early 1980s. It includes health, environment, and air pollution studies of Staten Island, expert testimony to the State, secondary research, and statistical analyses in the form of typed and dot matrix printed reports. The Power Authority of the State of New York's 28-volume application to the New York State Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment for the Staten Island plant is also included. It includes studies of the other possible locations for the project, including Hart Island. A small portion of this series is not related to the Staten Island plant project, but is included in the typed inventory that accompanied this material. The inventory notes of the material is unrelated and is titled "Fatal Myocardial Infarction and the Role of Oral Contraceptives."

Arrangement: This sub-subgroups is organized into three series: 1) Subject files; 2) Reading files; and 3) ConEd-Power Authority of the State of New York records. Series 1 is arranged alphabetically by topic, corresponding office or entity. Series 2 is arranged chronologically by month. There is no consistent arrangement scheme of arrangement Series 3. The arrangement of Series 3 was not altered in any way from how it was received.

Processing Information: The material in Series 3 was accessioned along with the records in sub-subgroups 1-15. They have been included with Ferrer's records though their date span is beyond Ferrer's time as commissioner. These records pertain to the construction of a coal-powered energy plant on Staten Island proposed by the State of New York in the early 1970s through early 1980s. The records included printed inventories prepared in 1987. Copies of this

inventory can be found in each of the first 10 boxes in the series, which contain the dot matrix printouts and lend themselves to box-level description in the finding aid.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 142265-142279 (Boxes 15.1-15.30), 142289-142312 (Boxes 15.31-15.67), 142316 (Boxes 15.104, 15.105), 142319-142336 (Boxes 15.68-15.103)

[Series 1: Subject files](#)

Date(s): 1978-1981

Size (Extent): 24 cubic feet (48 boxes)

[Series 2: Reading files](#)

Date(s): 1980-1981

Size (Extent): 3.5 cubic feet (7 boxes)

[Series 3: ConEd-Power Authority of the State of New York records](#)

Date(s): circa 1970-1987

Size (Extent): 30 cubic feet (50 boxes)

Sub-subgroup 16: David J. Sencer, 1981-1986, bulk 1982-1986

56 cubic feet (112 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. David J. Sencer took the helm of the Department of Health at the start of 1982 after a turn in the private sector and as director of the Centers for Disease Control for more than a decade. He oversaw the federal agency as it effectively eradicated smallpox worldwide in the 1970s and did important work with measles and malaria. Sencer was forced to resign from the CDC in 1977 after he spearheaded a nationwide swine flu vaccination campaign for an outbreak that never materialized.

When Sencer arrived in New York, he was immediately confronted with the perplexing and mounting number of cases Department epidemiologists had begun studying months earlier. These specialists worked along with doctors from the CDC and area hospitals who were seeing these strange cases of immune system suppression mostly in gay men. A report on the Department's activities from January 1982 illustrates the uncertainty surrounding the illness that would soon be called AIDS, stating "a major investigation of lymph node enlargement thought to be due to or to be a precursor of Kaposi's Syndrome is being launched by the Department of Health in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control."

In March of 1982, Sencer began holding monthly meetings with all the New York-area health professionals who were looking into the disease to share what they were seeing and learning. They also considered how to handle patient privacy and confidentiality. The Department would serve as the locus of investigations, which included closely monitoring existing cases, tracking new ones, determining risk factors and other work to learn how AIDS is transmitted. The Department of Health was still suffering the effects of the drastic budget cuts necessitated by the city's financial crisis of the 1970s when AIDS appeared in New York in 1981. Coupled with that, the federal government had cut funding to many health programs. The Department frequently sought and received grant funding from New York State and federal governments to carry out its work on AIDS.

Sencer organized the Interagency Task Force on AIDS, comprised of city officials from related departments, in January 1983. In March he established the Office of Gay and Lesbian Health Concerns within the Department of Health to coordinate a variety of services including, but not limited to AIDS. The Department faced sharp and pointed criticism from individual gay activists and newly-formed groups such as the Gay Men's Health Crisis for a lack of educational outreach, especially information on prevention. Soon the Department began funding GMHC's education and outreach programs in the gay community.

In early 1984 scientists identified the retrovirus that caused AIDS (first called HTLV-III) and a test to detect it in blood soon followed. Sencer decided use of the blood test should be tightly controlled by his Department due to concerns about confidentiality, stigma, and uncertainty of the test's utility. At first, the Department performed all tests requested by doctors but discouraged its widespread use. A hotline for questions about the blood test was set up.

Eventually Sencer loosened the policy and allowed hospitals to carry out testing. AIDS was soon also being reported among intravenous drug users who share needles and increasingly in minority communities, which complicated health officials' investigation into the disease and any efforts at public education. In 1985 Sencer began looking at the possibility of implementing a needle exchange program or changing state laws so IV drug users could more easily obtain clean needles. The idea was controversial and politically unpopular, and was dropped for the time.

Sencer made determinations on two important debates about AIDS in public spaces that had emerged by the end of his tenure. He did not believe closing gay bathhouses and clubs would help curb the spread of AIDS and was adamant that infected children continue to attend school. While many of the Department's resources and attention were focused on AIDS, health officials continued their work on all other fronts. Sencer backed Mayor Ed Koch's April 1985 bill to ban smoking in public places aside from specified non-smoking areas in the city. In 1982 the Department became responsible for enforcing a new law to strengthening treatment standards for the city's carriage horses. Also in 1982 a new rule requiring mobile food vendors follow the same Health Code rules as restaurants went into effect. The Department began studying the health effects of Staten Island's landfills on its residents.

Sencer stepped down as Commissioner to work abroad at the end of 1985. When he later returned to the U.S. he remained involved in public health issues and with the CDC. He died in 2011.

Scope and Content: Sub-subgroup 16 is comprised of internal and external records of the Department's work in a wide range of areas including pressing issues such as: AIDS, tuberculosis, venereal disease control, immunization, and monitoring welfare hotels and shelters as the city dealt with its escalating homelessness problem. Materials also cover the Department's operations in laboratories, outreach, environmental and sickness outbreak monitoring. Memos, reports, publications, and statistical analyses represent some of the material in this sub-subgroup.

The general correspondence series documents the impact of city budget cuts on the Department and acquiring program funding from outside agencies, but also represents the administrative work of the Department, including its handling of Health Code violations, mobile food vendor permits, and complaints from constituents on a variety of topics including unsanitary housing, restaurants, and street conditions. Meeting materials are also included. Some correspondence in Series 2 does reference AIDS, though the vast majority of that material can be found in Series 3.

The correspondence in Series 3 documents the Department of Health's efforts to understand and contain the emerging AIDS epidemic. There are many letters from fearful constituents and concerned health officials from around the country and world, to which Sencer responds, correspondence discussing the public framing of the disease and its risk factors, protocols and

procedures for collecting information about AIDS, patient confidentiality, requests for funding, as well as statistics related to the Department's case surveillance program.

It is important to note that prior to the designation of the name AIDS, Department of Health officials (and others) refer to the disease as KS (Kaposi's Sarcoma) and/or PCP (Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia).

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup is arranged into four series: 1) Subject files; 2) Correspondence; 3) Correspondence on AIDS; and 4) Publications and reports. Series 1 is arranged alphabetically by topic. Series 2 and 3 are arranged chronologically by month, while Series 4 is arranged chronologically.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 142313-142315 (Boxes 16.5-16.10), 142317-142318 (Boxes 16.1-16.4), 142337-142373 (Boxes 16.11-16.84), 188480-188491 (Boxes 16.85-16.91, 16.93-16.109), 188542-188544 (Boxes 16.92, 16.110-16.112)

Series 1: Subject files

Date(s): 1982-1985

Size (Extent): 46 cubic feet (92 boxes)

Series 2: Correspondence

Date(s): 1982-1985

Size (Extent): 4.5 cubic feet (9 boxes)

Series 3: Correspondence on AIDS

Date(s): 1982-1986

Size (Extent): 5 cubic feet (10 boxes)

Series 4: Publications and reports

Date(s): 1981-1985

Size (Extent): 1 cubic foot (2 boxes)

Sub-subgroup 17: Stephen C. Joseph, 1986-1989

51.5 cubic feet (103 boxes)

Biographical Note: Dr. Stephen C. Joseph came to the Department of Health in early 1986 from a top post at UNICEF. Prior to that he worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development, where he resigned over the Reagan administration's opposition to the World Health Organization's promotion of breastfeeding over infant formula.

Joseph's first efforts to tackle the AIDS crisis included giving more New Yorkers access to the HIV test by setting up anonymous testing sites around the city and encouraging private physicians to offer it. He also steered a television and print ad campaign openly promoting condom use and linking unprotected sex and the sharing of dirty needles to AIDS and death. After criticism from conservative and religious groups, Koch directed the Department to produce ads promoting abstinence to teenagers. During this time health officials increasingly focused on assessing the risks of heterosexual transmission.

The Department also expanded access to condoms and educational resources by funding programs at community organizations engaged in local outreach. This was especially the case in poor and minority communities, which were seeing skyrocketing levels of infection. Joseph worked to codify patient confidentiality protocols, which could only be done at the state level. He wanted to compel physicians to alert partners of HIV or AIDS-infected individuals who they believe were at risk of contracting the disease. By the end of 1988, the state passed and the governor signed a law allowing, but not obligating, doctors to break that confidentiality to warn partners. It also required written and informed consent and counseling for those wanting to get tested.

For years, the Health Department and external sources of information reported figure of 400,000 HIV cases in New York City. As the epidemic grew and the Department gathered more data, in 1988 Joseph wanted to reassess that number. In July of that year Joseph announced a new 200,000 estimate and explained that the revised number did not mean the crisis was any less severe. It was based on an adjustment of the proportion gay men infected with HIV. However, the Department's downward revision of its estimate of HIV cases outraged AIDS activists.

The Department revisited the needle exchange issue under Joseph, though doing so was not without opposition from many constituencies. He and Mayor Ed Koch worked with the State Department of Health on drafting a program, ultimately landing on a compromise between two divergent visions by the middle of 1988. Joseph publicly promoted the program in an effort to ease public concern and criticism. The Department launched the small pilot program in fall 1988, but Koch had scaled back the number of exchange sites. The remaining location was the Department of Health office itself and the program failed to draw participants initially, but it continued throughout 1989 and did grow somewhat. Ultimately, opposition from the City

Council, constituent groups and Democrats running against Koch in the mayoral primary. When Mayor David Dinkins took office in 1990 he officially killed the program.

In 1989, as the crisis continued to worsen, Joseph proposed doctors report the names of HIV-infected patients to the Department of Health and the tracing of their sexual partners or anyone they might have infected by sharing needles. The proposal drew immense opposition immediately. To Koch, it was a non-starter. Instead, the mayor committed more money to the Department's testing efforts and public education.

The underlying spike in homelessness during the 1980s, combined with the AIDS and crack epidemics all led to levels of tuberculosis in the city that had not been seen in decades. Infant mortality stemming from several of the same factors was another sustained crisis the Department faced.

Meanwhile, in April 1988 the city officially banned cigarette smoking indoors except for designated smoking areas. The Health Code was also amended to regulate the pit bull pet population and ban future ownership of the breed after concern over bites. There were also periodic measles outbreaks during this period leading the Department to redouble immunization efforts.

Joseph resigned with the end of the Koch administration in 1989 and became dean of the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota.

Scope and Content: This sub-subgroup contains Commissioner Joseph's incoming and outgoing correspondence ranging from communications inside the Department, with other parts of city government, various health advocacy groups, federal institutions, and constituents. There are also invitations, meeting materials, speeches and articles. The material covers the Department's general administrative functions, including budgeting and disseminating permits, requests for outside funding for AIDS and other programs, and contracts.

Series 1, Subseries 2 contains health-related correspondence constituents sent to the Office of the Mayor that was then forwarded to the Department of Health. Many of those letters relate to property sanitation and pest control. There are also numerous letters from the public about AIDS and needle exchange efforts.

The subject files contain records on the Department's wide range of operations. The most substantial amount of records relate to the Department's AIDS efforts, the 1988 ban on smoking in public places, and Commissioner Joseph's proposed needle exchange program, including letters of public comment and opinion. The Department's close work with the Mayor's office and Health and Hospitals Corporation is also represented. The records include reports, statistics, grant applications, and memos.

Many of the academic articles and speeches in this sub-subgroup relate to AIDS, while others cover infant mortality, drug addiction, and window falls. Some are remarks or testimony given at government hearings.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup is arranged into seven series according to the nature of the material: 1) Correspondence; 2) Invitations and meetings; 3) Manuscripts and speeches; 4) Subject files; 5) Reprints; 6) Travel and conferences; and 7) Publications and reports.

Series 1 is organized into two separate subseries. Subseries 1 and 2 are organized chronologically.

Series 2, 5 and 6 are organized chronologically. The manuscripts in Series 3, often undated, are organized alphabetically by title, while the speeches are arranged chronologically. This largely reflects the original arrangement of this material. Series 4 and 7 are arranged alphabetically.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 188492-188542 (Boxes 17.1-17.15, 17.18-17.46, 17.48-17.103), 188544 (Box 17.47), 188554 (Box 17.16), 188556 (Box 17.17)

[Series 1: Correspondence](#)

Date(s): 1986-1989

Size (Extent): 23.5 cubic feet (47 boxes)

Arrangement: The series has been divided into two subseries: 1) Chronological; and 2) City Hall.

[Series 2: Invitations and meetings](#)

Date(s): 1986-1989

Size (Extent): 8.5 cubic feet (17 boxes)

[Series 3: Manuscripts and speeches](#)

Date(s): 1985-1989, undated

Size (Extent): 2 cubic feet (4 boxes)

[Series 4: Subject files](#)

Date(s): 1986-1989

Size (Extent): 15 cubic feet (30 boxes)

[Series 5: Reprints](#)

Date(s): 1987-1989

Size (Extent): 0.5 cubic feet (1 box)

Series 6: Travel and correspondence

Date(s): 1986-1989

Size (Extent): 1 cubic foot (2 boxes)

Series 7: Travel and correspondence

Date(s): 1988-1990

Size (Extent): 1.5 cubic feet (3 boxes)

Sub-subgroup 18: Woodrow A. Myers Jr., 1990-1991

32.5 cubic feet (65 boxes)

Biographical Note: Appointed by the newly elected Mayor David Dinkins, Dr. Woodrow A. Myers, Jr. served as New York City Health Commissioner for just one and half years, from January 1990 to June 1991. As with other commissioners who served through the 1980s and 1990s, the AIDS crisis loomed large within the Department of Health as it wrestled with trying to curb the spread of the disease and care for the already sick. However, Myers did engage with other issues of importance such as a Pap smear testing backlog, a measles outbreak, tuberculosis, and large budget cuts as the city continued to struggle financially. Myers weighed in on contentious debates over whether condoms should be distributed in schools and whether or not safe injection education could help curb the spread of AIDS. During his short time as Health Commissioner he also replaced a majority of the upper management and reorganized a number of divisions within the department.

Prior to his appointment as Health Commissioner, Woodrow Myers, an MD with a degree in business, joined the faculty at University of California School of Medicine in San Francisco where he gained direct experience with the escalating AIDS epidemic. Myers left San Francisco when he was appointed Health Commissioner of his home state of Indiana in 1985. In that role, Myers gained national attention for his public support in allowing Ryan White, a teenager diagnosed with HIV, to attend an Indiana public school after being prohibited by the Superintendent James O. Smith. Myers' stance on AIDS-related topics would prove to be controversial in New York as well. When news of his appointment as New York City Health Commissioner was made public in January of 1990, members of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), alarmed over news reports that Myers had previously supported a law in Indiana that would require HIV carriers to be tracked by name and a quarantine for those infected with the virus, organized a protest. Furthermore, Myers faced criticism when he decided to bar the use of city funds to provide safe injection education as a means to control the spread of HIV.

One of the high profile issues that arose during this period was a scandal related to untested Pap smears. Although the problem began while Stephen Joseph was Commissioner, Myers was in office when the media began reporting on the huge backlog of untested Pap smears at Department of Health clinic labs. Issues around changes in testing frequency along with allegations of poorly run facilities are said to have created the problem. The media reported on mismanagement in Health Department laboratories and the potential for devastating health consequences for women who were not alerted to results that suggested any potential for cervical cancer in a timely manner. Myers responded to this by condemning the problem, demoting top officials, and releasing a public report detailing how the problem occurred.

A measles outbreak came to the fore as the Department of Health announced that the rate of new measles cases had severely increased, especially for young black and Hispanic children during 1990 and 1991. As a response to this, Myers issued an alert to the medical community

urging them to vaccinate young children and outlined new emergency guidelines for immunization in day cares, preschools, and family shelters.

In 1990 and 1991, large budget gaps necessitated major cuts to many city services and departments. Mayor Dinkins asked the Department to make cuts that included closing down the Bureau of Nutrition entirely, and an additional proposal from Myers eliminated the school health counselor program. Both were met with a large amount of criticism from the public and city employees. The Bureau of Nutrition, which had been operational for nearly 50 years, argued that their services were unique, cost effective, and targeted New Yorkers at risk for nutritional problems. In response to ending the school health counselor program, hundreds of school children sent letters urging the Department to reconsider.

Myers resigned in May of 1991, naming family health issues as his reason for resignation. He then moved back to Indiana where he accepted a position as Corporate Medical Director and Senior Vice President of the Associated Group.

Scope and Content: Sub-subgroup 18 includes correspondence, subject files, reports, invitations and conference materials from Myers' tenure as health commissioner. The correspondence, sometimes in the form of faxes, documents Myers' (and that of Dr. Margaret Hamburg, who succeeded him as commissioner) internal communications, relations with the public as well as entities outside of city government. There is a large focus on the AIDS crisis, tuberculosis, homelessness, and the Pap smear backlog. Forwarded complaints from the mayor's office are also in this series. They mostly pertain to sanitation, pest, and permit issues, though there is also a fair amount of letters from the public about proposed cuts to some of the Department's programs.

The subject files consist of internal and external correspondence, memoranda, and reports as well as a number of outside agency reports and publications. Most of the subject files contain records from the mid to late 1980s, before Myers took office, through his departure in 1991. While this series is overwhelmingly comprised of records related to the city's continuing struggle with the AIDS epidemic, there are a number of folders on topics such as the smoking ban, the city's contract with the ASPCA, child health initiatives, the untested Pap smear scandal, and the Department's attempt to deal with the drug problem from a public health standpoint. Of note are documents related to the ACT UP protest that occurred with the announcement of Myers' appointment as Health Commissioner and the decision by Myers to end city funding for safe injection education.

Meeting records include minutes, agendas, memos, and related correspondence. There are some conference materials as well. Myers' records also include the contents of eight albums of press clippings chronicling Myers' tenure as health commissioner. The clippings reflect issues such as the AIDS crisis, the Pap smear backlog scandal, and measles outbreaks in the city. There are a small amount of miscellaneous internal memoranda, correspondence, and reports dating from this time period that have been included with Myers' records. This includes material related to budget issues including budget cuts and documents outlining new needs budget

requests for various divisions and projects of the Department. The new needs files outline detailed descriptions of the day-to-day work of various programs through itemized budgets and budget proposals. There are also folders of correspondence with specific offices including the Office of Governmental Affairs, the Office of External Affairs and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

Arrangement: This sub-subgroup is arranged into six series: 1) Correspondence; 2) Subject files; 3) Invitations and meetings; 4) Press albums; 5) Travel and conferences; and 6) Reports and administrative materials. Series 1, 3, 4 and 5 are organized chronologically. Series 2 is arranged alphabetically by subject. Series 6 is arranged alphabetically by subject, document type or the particular office of which the correspondence is between.

Location: Off-site storage, Shelf 188545-188577 (Boxes 18.1-18.65)

Series 1: Correspondence

Date(s): 1990-1991

Size (Extent): 11.5 cubic feet (23 boxes)

Arrangement: This series is divided into two subseries according to the nature of the correspondence: 1) Chronological; and 2) City Hall.

Series 2: Subject files

Date(s): 1985-1991, bulk 1990-1991

Size (Extent): 8.5 cubic feet (17 boxes)

Series 3: Invitations and meetings

Date(s): 1990-1991

Size (Extent): 8.5 cubic feet (17 boxes)

Series 4: Press albums

Date(s): 1990-1991

Size (Extent): 1 cubic foot (2 boxes)

Series 5: Reports and administrative materials

Date(s): 1985-1991, bulk 1990-1991

Size (Extent): 2.5 cubic feet (5 boxes)