

American Journal of



PUBLIC HEALTH

and the Nation's Health

Official Monthly Publication of the American Public Health Association, Inc.

Volume 45

March, 1955

Number 3

Symposium on Community Self-Surveys in Health

ODIN W. ANDERSON, Ph.D., F.A.P.H.A.

Many there are who lend verbal support to the concept that "the people" must somehow be involved, if present-day public health programs are to succeed. But involving the people presents practical difficulties. Some of them become evident in these papers that were a part of a broader program. The papers themselves are regrettably, but necessarily, shortened.

✿ The health field is gradually looking to social scientists for assistance in the promotion, organization, and administration of health programs. Someone has observed that during its sanitation and communicable disease stages public health was rooted in the laboratory sciences. Now public health is looking also to the social sciences for assistance, since vital public health is concerned with people and communities. There is always a lag between what we know about possible health improvements and

their application and it is hoped that social science can assist in shortening that lag.

This symposium will be concerned chiefly with the social and community organizational aspects in which health programs are planned, promoted, and succeed or fail as the case may be. Specifically, can the community self-survey technic, which will be illustrated and explained, serve as an effective instrument for public health action?

Dr. Anderson is research director, Health Information Foundation, New York, N. Y.

The introductory remarks by Dr. Anderson and the following three papers in this symposium were presented before a Joint Session of the Dental Health, Food and Nutrition, Health Officers, Public Health Education, and Public Health Nursing Sections of the American Public Health Association at the Eighty-second Annual Meeting in Buffalo, N. Y., October 14, 1954.

The three community surveys were financed by the Health Information Foundation, New York, N. Y.