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SEVEN-YEAR PLAN AND INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE

- USSR -

by S. Kurashov

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## SEVEN-YEAR PLAN AND INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE

Following is a translation of an article written by S. Kurashov in Sovetskiye Profsoyuzy (Soviet Trade-Unions), No. 11, Moscow, 1959, pages 9-12.<sup>7</sup>

The Soviet public health system is the most advanced and perfect. It satisfies the vital needs of every man. Daily care by the government, for the health of the people, unprecedented in history, is to be seen in socialist society. The successes of our system of health care evoke a legitimate feeling of pride in the Soviet people.

The rising prosperity, the improved living and working conditions, the improved and expanded activity of medical-prophylactic institutions, and the outstanding discoveries and achievements of advanced medical science have had a most beneficial effect on public health. There has been a falling off of disease. In comparison with the countries of Western Europe, the Soviet Union has the highest birth rate and population increase. The average span of life in the USSR is 67. It is more than double what it was in prerevolutionary Russia.

The Seven-Year Plan of the national economy of the USSR has outlined a broad program of continued improvement in the field of public health. A great deal is yet to be done in the area of better, more sanitary and safer work conditions at plants and construction projects. The latest achievements of science and technology and the complex mechanization of heavy and labor-consuming operations will be extensively used for this purpose. A great deal will be done to lighten the labor of women and young workers.

Large funds have been earmarked by the government for expanding the network of nurseries and kindergartens, boarding schools and after-school centers; for free medical care, sanatoria and houses of rest, social insurance benefits to workers and clerks, benefits to mothers who are alone or who have many children, pensions, paid vacations for workers etc. These outlays by the state in 1965 will amount to approximately 360 billion rubles in 1965 as against 215 billion rubles in 1958 and will equal about 3,800<sup>rubles</sup> per every worker.

Moreover, more than 800 rubles annually will be spent on every worker for the construction of new comfortable houses, schools and cultural and medical institutions. Capital investments in the construction of medical-prophylactic institutions, enterprises of the medical industry, the development of social insurance, physical culture and athletics for the seven year period will amount to 25.4 billion rubles -- 80 percent more than in the preceding seven years.

A great deal of attention is paid the training of qualified medical personnel, one of the decisive factors in a successful health program. In prerevolutionary Russia there were only 23 thousand physicians and 50 thousand medical aides. Now there are more than 360 thousand physicians and 1150 thousand other medical personnel in our country. The USSR holds first place in the world in providing physicians for the population. By the end of the seven-year period the number of physicians in the country will exceed a half a million. On the average, there will be one physician to every 460 men. In this respect, the USSR has long since outstripped the most developed capitalist countries.

In tsarist Russia there were only 13 hospital beds to every 10,000 inhabitants. Now there are 74. In the coming seven-year period hospital-polyclinical help to the population will increase considerably: it is planned to provide 530 thousand additional beds. As a result, by the end of 1965, the network will comprise 2063 thousand hospital beds. The network of hospitals is growing at a particularly fast rate in Tadzhikistan, Azerbaydzhan and Belorussia. This is a graphic demonstration of the concern of the Party and the government for public health in all the national republics.

It has been decided to build many sanatoria, houses of rest, pensions, hotels and other spa institutions for the whole family. The spas of the Urals, Siberia, the Far East, Kazakhstan, the Central-Asian republics, Belorussia and Moldavia are to develop with especial rapidity. By the end of the seven-year period, the sanatoria will accommodate 51 thousand more guests, and the houses of rest -- 20 thousand more.

The social insurance budget which this year has reached the immense sum of 63.9 billion rubles, will increase in the coming seven-year period by 70 to 80 percent in comparison with 1958.

The 20th Party Congress has entrusted Soviet health personnel with tasks of exceptional importance. Their creative labor will raise to new heights the quality of medical services and will guarantee new successes in the war against disease and premature old age, enabling the Soviet people to preserve good health, vitality and strength for many years to come. These noble tasks demand closer and more widespread cooperation between organs of health and the trade-unions.

The Soviet trade-unions are the largest labor organization in the USSR, they are an enormous force, exerting a good influence on every aspect of our social development. The daily help and support by the trade unions and their organized social supervision over the activity of medical-prophylactic institutions foster the fulfillment of the goals of health care and the elimination of the serious shortcomings in the medical services available to workers that still exist.

The participants in the 12th Trade Union Congress have justly noted that the organs of health do poor work in the area of disease prevention, at times tolerating infringements of sanitary regulations at plants. The Ministries of Health in the USSR and the union republics have not given sufficient thought to problems of the hygiene and physiology of labor of fatigue and the regimen of rest as well as the rational nutrition of workers and employees of different professions. Health organs ought to cooperate with the trade unions in quickly resolving these problems.

The work of spas and sanatoria is also in serious need of improvement. The mass of workers should be drawn into their management. It behoves Medical workers to take a more active part in the battle for a new way of life.

Efforts, and creative energy should be exerted to achieve a sharp decline in illness among workers at industrial enterprises and to improve the medical and sanitation services to workers of the leading branches. Therefore it is exceptionally important to build up and expand the network of medical and prophylactic institutions working directly at plants, such as medical and sanitation departments and health centers staffed by physicians or medical aides.

Many committees on social insurance at factory and plant committees and their insurance delegates have a good grasp of the organization of medical services and help improve it. The factory and plant committees, the oblast committees of trades unions and the councils of trade unions held public discussions on health and resolve great practical problems.

The experience of advanced medical and sanitation departments of the Podol'sk machine, Gor'kiy automobile and many other plants shows what serious successes in improving the conditions of work and in lowering the incidence on disease, can be achieved when medical staff work in close contact with the trade-unions. The social insurance committee at "Azovstal'" regularly discusses at its meetings the reports of the director of the plant and the chief of the department of medicine and sanitation on the progress of the complex plan of measures for healthier conditions of labor. The medical

staff of Hospital No. 24 of the Gor'kiy automobile plant has skillfully organized visiting health services for workers and clerks, thus sharply increasing the benefits of hospitalization. The sanitation aktiv of housewives and pensioners has been drawn into the work of home care for the sick after a special training course. The medical and sanitation department of Uralmachzavod The Urals Machine Plant, the "Krasnaya Zvezda" mines in Chistaykovo, the Stalinogorskiy nitrogen-fertilizer combine and a number of other enterprises have organized good preventive work at their plants: the medical aides are helped by the trade-union aktiv.

At many enterprises, systematic reports by physicians at worker's meetings, joint conferences of the trade-union aktiv, and medical aides, and public inspection tours of safety measures and production sanitation are a regular practice. Experience has shown that the activity of large medical sanitation departments which have all kinds of specialized help and a hospital of 200 to 400 beds is the most effective. Hence, it is desirable to set up one medical-sanitation unit for several enterprises situated at a short distance from one another. The existence of special medical-sanitation units for the benefit of the personnel of one enterprises is justifiable only at large plants and factories.

Most of the workers are cared for by the overall network of medical institutions. City and rayon hospitals, polyclinics and dispensaries should provide priority hospitalization and polyclinical services to workers from plants and construction projects who are assigned to the given medical institution. Their activity should be so organized that any production worker could obtain all types of polyclinical help after work hours. In many dispensaries there are special departments for workers of affiliated factories and plants, whereas the polyclinics are organizing their own branches at relatively remote enterprises.

Gigantic construction, as is known, is in progress in Siberia, the Far East, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian Republics. The industrial base of old long-settled districts is being rebuilt and expanded. It is the task of organs of health, jointly with the trade-unions, to develop in detail and put into operation the plans of the development of the network of medical-prophylactic and children's institutions in the districts where new construction is in progress. It is necessary for every large enterprise to have its own polyclinic. Mass supervision by trade-unions of the progress of the construction of hospitals, polyclinics and nurseries and the work of newly organized medical institutions, should be organized.

An outstanding role in improving the activity of health organs should belong to the trade-unions of medical personnel. Our trade-union organizations are mobilizing an army of three million health department workers to help carry out the historic decrees of the 21st Party Congress and to raise the quality of medical and preventive services to the population. They act as organizers of the mass movement for high standards of sanitation, for the continued improvement of the living and working conditions of the masses. In Moscow, the trade-union organizations of many medical institutions have followed the example of the staff of the hospital imeni Botkin, in carrying out public inspection of the work of all the departments and services. This has helped raise the quality of the medical-preventive services to workers. At many plants and factories new health centers have been opened.

At the focus of the attention of organs of health, trade-unions and all other public organizations, is the health of children. The number of openings in nurseries and kindergartens is constantly increasing. In the coming seven-year period they will have room for 900 thousand more children. However, we cannot overlook the fact that in a number of districts and oblasts, the plans of construction of children's institutions are being poorly fulfilled. The trade-unions must take control of all such building projects to help them fulfill their quotes on time.

The high standards of Soviet health care and the attainments of medical science make it possible in the coming seven-year period fully to liquidate some communicable diseases and sharply to reduce the incidence of others. They are to liquidate malaria, diphtheria, typhus, hydrophobia, mosquito fever, skin leishmaniasis and many types of helminthiasis. A broad offensive will be conducted against poliomyelitis, tick-borne spirochetosis, encephalitis and other diseases for their ultimate total elimination.

New aims in the sphere of health arise in connection with the vigorous development of the chemical industry, radioactive technology, the use of atomic energy, high purity currents etc. The study of problems of toxicology in relation to its industrial uses, and scientific research into the isotope method is coming to the fore as a matter of prime importance. Scientific development should actively influence planning to enable technological operations and their semi-finished and finished products to be harmless to health.

The health organs jointly with the trade-unions and state plans of the republics must, in the very near future, develop a program of scientific research in the area of industrial toxicology and the protection of reservoirs and soil

from pollution. They must organize special scientific research laboratories or institutes which would devote themselves to preventive sanitary supervision.

In the last two years some advances have been made in purifying air from industrial wastes. But unfortunately year after year, the funds allotted to this work are not fully used. In a number of places rational purifying methods have not been technically worked out, and the cleansing equipment is far from perfect. And yet it was established long ago that in districts in which the atmosphere is dirty the incidence of sore throats, bronchitis, pneumonia and pleuresy is always above normal. Health protection also requires that in newly construction housing projects there should be running water and sewers and everything else that helps avoid soil pollution. The role of active and exacting trade-union supervision is truly invaluable in taking care of these matters.

Soviet medicine made a serious contribution to the treasury of world science. Our physicians command perfect methods of prophylaxis, diagnosis and treatment of many diseases. However, for from all the urgent problems of medicine that agitate man have been solved. As is known, the basic causes of adult mortality are the diseases of the cardio-vascular system and cancer. The Soviet scientists have conducted a great deal of interesting research into these problems, but work on them should be intensified. This year, the complex working out of the problem of malignant tumors is to be organized, using the latest achievements of chemistry, physics and biology. Outstanding scientists are being drawn into participation in this project.

Hereafter, the work of preventive medicine will be expanded still more. We are speaking of specialized tests for discovering pre-cancerous diseases, of the use of radiation and multiple treatment of tumors on a large scale, as well as the use of anti-tumor preparations such as sareolysin, depan, omaine and others. It is perfectly obvious that without serious, major research we shall not be able to find a radical cancer cure.

The most common of infections is influenza, followed by catarrhs of upper respiratory tracts and throat infections. More than 30 percent of temporary disability is caused by these diseases. The interests of the national economy demand broad research by scientists into this area of sickness and, the working out of the most effective methods for the prevention and treatment of these diseases.

The system of Soviet health agencies is constantly in need of the latest medical equipment, modern technology, instruments and effective drugs. During the last five years

the production of medicines, and instruments has increased two and a half times, the annual increase of production in the medical industry being 15 to 20 percent. Nevertheless, the needs of the population and the medical and prophylactic institutions are not yet fully satisfied.

The Seven-Year Plan specifies almost a tripling of medical production, including anti-biotics whose production will rise 3.7 times, vitamins -- 6 times, medical instruments 2 to 2.5 times. The pharmaceutical industry should, in the very near future, satisfy the needs of the population for hormonal preparations, vitamins, ganglion blocking drugs and highly effective drugs for lowering blood pressure.

The Soviet public health system has been universally acknowledged to be the most progressive. It is a model of medical services to the countries of the socialist camp. Like all the activity of our government it reflects the Leninist policy of setting the sights on a consistent and steadfast rise in the living standards of the workers and the good and happiness of mankind.

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