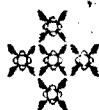


MATERNITY CARE
IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

Pike County, Mississippi, 1931-1936



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FOREWORD

FOR some time the Commonwealth Fund has been interested in developing services for the improvement of care of mothers and infants in rural areas. The public health programs to which it has contributed have emphasized the importance of work in this field and through clinical and nursing service have improved the amount and character of supervision in the antepartum and postpartum periods. In 1931 a public health program was established in Pike County typical of those developed in several other areas. By providing instructive public health nursing service and a certain amount of clinical service supplementary to the work of private physicians, it was hoped to influence the general health status of the population. It was apparent that to secure greatest effectiveness for maternity and child health the activities of the health department must be coordinated with the obstetrical care offered by private physicians. To take stock of what had been accomplished and disclose ways of further improving local maternity care, arrangements were made, at the request of the state department of health, for Dr. Lapham, then conducting a postgraduate course in obstetrics for physicians within the state, to study maternity care in all of its phases in Pike County. The plan of study was presented to the local physicians and endorsed by them and through their

active participation what is believed to be a very accurate picture of present obstetrical practice in the county was made possible. It is thought that the suggestions for the improvement of the program which follow the study provide sound guides to physicians and health departments alike.

W. FRANK WALKER, DR.P.H.

*Director of Health Studies
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APPENDIX

TABLE I
 TOTAL BIRTHS, CASES UNDER ANTEPARTUM NURSING SUPERVISION,
 LIVE BIRTHS, MATERNAL DEATHS, STILLBIRTHS, AND NEONATAL
 DEATHS, BY ATTENDANT AND BY COLOR, PIKE COUNTY,
 1931-36

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Supervision</i>	<i>No supervision</i>
Total births	4,795	1,416	3,379
Physician	2,616	752	1,864
Midwife	2,179	664	1,515
White	2,138	539	1,599
Negro	2,657	877	1,780
Live births	4,627	1,372	3,255
Physician	2,523	731	1,792
Midwife	2,104	641	1,463
White	2,084	527	1,557
Negro	2,543	845	1,698
Maternal deaths	35	10	25
Physician	24	7	17
Midwife	11	3	8
White	11	2	9
Negro	24	8	16
Stillbirths	168	44	124
Physician	83	21	62
Midwife	85	23	62
White	54	12	42
Negro	114	32	82
Neonatal deaths	165	46	119
Physician	100	17	83
Midwife	65	29	36
White	81	10	71
Negro	84	36	48

TABLE 2
SERVICES OF THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT FOR ANTEPARTUM AND POSTPARTUM CASES BY COLOR,
PIKE COUNTY, 1931-33 AND 1934-36

	TOTAL		WHITE		COLORED	
	1931-33	1934-36	1931-33	1934-36	1931-33	1934-36
<i>Antepartum nursing service</i>						
Individuals served	428	988	184	355	244	633
Total visits	1,220	4,673	511	1,609	709	2,994
Average visits per case	2.9	4.7	2.8	4.5	2.9	4.7
<i>Cases referred by*</i>						
Physician	44	69	36	47	8	22
Midwife	100	76	3	-	97	76
Self	58	197	13	54	45	143
Nurse	126	102	66	34	60	68
Other	100	246	66	109	34	137
<i>Total</i>	428	690	184	244	244	446
<i>Month of pregnancy admitted</i>						
Before fifth	65	257	26	83	39	174
Fifth to eighth	225	563	88	191	137	372
Ninth to tenth	132	168	68	81	64	87
Unknown	6	-	2	-	4	-

* No record of referral for 1936.

TABLE 2 (continued)

	TOTAL		WHITE		COLORED	
	1931-33	1934-36	1931-33	1934-36	1931-33	1934-36
<i>Antepartum nursing service (cont.)</i>						
Individuals under care of private physician	163	604	114	318	49	286
Visits to or by physician	360	2,609	253	1,733	107	876
Average visits per case	2.2	4.3	2.2	5.4	2.2	3.1
Referred by nurse to physician	101	452	42	115	59	337
Seen by physician after referral	39	235	24	91	15	144
<i>Postpartum nursing service†</i>						
Individuals served	320	925	152	337	168	588
Total visits	597	2,894	301	1,124	296	1,770
Average visits per case	1.9	3.1	2.0	3.3	1.8	3.0
Days after delivery of first visit						
First to second day	66	341	39	147	27	194
Third to fourth day	31	211	16	55	15	156
Fifth to fourteenth day	108	287	49	111	59	176
Fifteenth day to two months	115	86	48	24	67	62

† Includes only individuals who had received antepartum service.

TABLE 2 (continued)

	TOTAL		WHITE		COLORED	
	1931-33	1934-36	1931-33	1934-36	1931-33	1934-36
<i>Antepartum medical service</i>						
Individuals served	125	389	13	24	112	365
Total visits	157	587	16	33	141	554
Average visits per case	1.3	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.5
Cases with complications	53	170	3	7	50	163
Referred by clinic physician to private physician	5	22	-	1	5	21
Seen by physician after referral	4	12	-	-	4	12