

## *Introduction*

Since the Dade County Department of Public Health was established in 1942 through the consolidation of the health departments existing at that time, seventeen annual reports have been published. These reports have reflected the uninterrupted expansion and spectacular progress of our community. As in preceding years, the 1959 Annual Health Report attempts to highlight the major accomplishments and some of the problems that we encountered during the year. It would require a thick book to present a complete picture of the varied and complex activities of this modern health department.

Perhaps it is well to begin this report by reviewing certain basic concepts that set our goals and guided our work. First, we agree that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being of the individual and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. We also believe that public health represents the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting physical and mental efficiency through organized community effort. These fundamental definitions are the foundations of our legal responsibility "to plan, develop and supervise a systematic program designed to prevent, control and cure diseases, their origin and diffusion among inhabitants of the county, and for the education of the public on health and sanitation problems."

The first section of the 1959 Annual Health Report outlines the main functions of each

division of the Department of Public Health and includes related service statistics. It will be noted that the types and volume of service continued to increase due to population growth and greater public awareness of Department of Public Health facilities. This increase was apparent in services that could be tabulated such as clinic visits, x-rays, nursing visits, immunizations, sanitation visits and inspections, and it was also present in services which were not readily measurable such as administration, education, and research. To improve the health and welfare of the community, the Department of Public Health has always willingly accepted additional duties and responsibilities.

The second portion of this report contains detailed vital statistics for Dade County. It also includes graphic presentations of tuberculosis deaths, maternal mortality, infant mortality, and neonatal mortality since 1950. From the official records filed at the Department of Public Health, we tabulate much of the information that helps the community to formulate programs of education, research, and direct service. In addition to the numbers of births and deaths, data is gathered concerning types of illnesses and causes of death by age group, sex, and color. These facts are forwarded to the State Bureau of Vital Statistics and to the National Office of Vital Statistics. Uniform nomenclature and coding have been established so that the health of one area can be accurately compared with that of others.