

HOUSE No. 89

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH,
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, November 1, 1949.

To the General Court of Massachusetts.

In accordance with the provisions of section 33 of chapter 30 of the General Laws, a copy of the recommendations for legislation to be contained in the annual report of this department is submitted herewith, together with drafts of bills embodying the legislation recommended. These drafts have been submitted to the counsel for the House, as required by law.

VLADO A. GETTING, M.D.,
Commissioner of Public Health.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. AN ACT TO FURTHER REGULATE THE FILING OF NOTICE OF INTENTION OF MARRIAGE AND THE ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF SUCH FILING.

The proposed changes in section 28A of chapter 207 of the General Laws, will —

(a) Permit a qualified physician, registered or licensed to practice in the territories of the United States or the District of Columbia, a physician of the Public Health Service, or a Canadian physician to sign premarital medical certificates in their respective communities for all individuals planning to be married in Massachusetts. Our present law permits only physicians licensed to practice in Massachusetts and other States, and members of the armed forces on active duty.

(b) Permit the Department to designate by regulation the approved serologic test for syphilis. The present law permits any serologic test for syphilis.

(c) Permit the Department to decide by regulation what laboratories outside of Massachusetts are acceptable for premarital examinations of out-of-state residents who plan to be married in Massachusetts. The present law merely states that the out-of-state laboratories be approved by the United States Public Health Service.

(d) Require certification by the examining physician that the applicants for a premarital certificate do not have syphilis, or, if so infected, are not in the stage which is communicable; it therefore prevents marriage when one of the parties has syphilis in a communicable stage. The applicant with communicable syphilis would be required to receive treatment before a medical certificate could be issued. Our present law permits a marriage of such individuals only after the physician has called both partners of a marriage together and informs the non-infected applicant of the disease in the prospective spouse. Once both applicants know this, there is no legal hindrance to their marriage.

(e) Require that all physicians use the Massachusetts Medical Certificate Form except when the physical and blood tests are performed by an out-of-state physician. In these instances, the out-of-state physician may use the official medical certificate forms of his State, territory, etc., provided the name of the laboratory is recorded, the laboratory is one approved by this Department, and the physician certifies that the patient does not have syphilis, or, if so infected, is not in a stage which is communicable.

2. AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION RESEARCH LABORATORY, AND AUTHORIZING THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION, WITHOUT CONSIDERATION, TO LEASE OR CONVEY LANDS OR BUILDINGS OF THE COMMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

The purpose of this legislation is to provide a research laboratory in which matters relating to environmental sanitation may be studied, including matters relating to water supply, sewage and industrial waste disposal, water pollution control, shellfish investigations, plumbing hydraulics, co-operative work with the Division of Occupational Hygiene of the Department of Labor and Industries, and any other matters relating to environmental sanitation. The present laboratory at the Lawrence Experiment Station is inadequate in size, is located on private lands where the Department is a tenant at will, and where it has been considered unwise to expend further funds in the enlargement of this present station.

3. AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO ERECT A BUILDING TO HOUSE AND MAINTAIN THE DIVISIONS AND BUREAUS OF SAID DEPARTMENT, EXCEPT THE DIVISION OF BIOLOGIC LABORATORIES AND THE FIELD UNITS OF THE DEPARTMENT.

For over twenty-five years the Department of Public Health has occupied its present quarters in the State

House. During this period the work of the Department has more than tripled, and yet no additional space has been assigned in the State House. As a result, the Department has been obliged to look for quarters elsewhere, and now pays over \$25,000 annually for those divisions which cannot be housed within the State House.

As a result of this dispersion, the Department has found it difficult to co-ordinate completely the work of the various divisions and bureaus which are not readily accessible. Greater efficiency in the operation of the Department and closer integration can be achieved only by the location of the Department's central offices in one building.

The proposed legislation will authorize the Department to use for a Department building such Federal funds as may be made available for this purpose.