

Mark Resigning City Health Post

Toledo Board To Ask County To Consider Combined Program

Dr. Hilbert Mark, Toledo health commissioner since 1958, announced Wednesday that he is resigning, effective next Feb. 3, when his contract expires.

The announcement touched off a reaction which may lead to combined city-county health operations.

The Toledo board of health accepted the resignation with regret and voted to ask the Lucas County board of health to meet with the city board in the next few weeks to consider a common district or combined health program of some kind.

Of several possible merger steps, Dr. Mark said the best would be for the Lucas County, Maumee, and Oregon health districts to contract for health services from Toledo.

This arrangement is possible under a 1967 state law.

Now, Oregon and Maumee contract with the county general health district, composed of townships, villages, and Sylva.

Other possible methods of coordination or cooperation which Dr. Mark cited include:

- ▶ Union with the county health district.
- ▶ Contract between cities.
- ▶ Contract between the city and county health departments.
- ▶ Cooperative employment of a health commissioner.

Consolidation of the boards has been discussed for 27 years without success, so the city board has turned to a cooperative or coordinated approach.

Equitable financing for city and rural areas has been the prime factor in preventing consolidation, Dr. Mark said. He has urged some kind of city-county program throughout his career here.

City board members asked that announcement of their request be given to city council, county commissioners, and the Greater Toledo Municipal League.

Consolidation Recommended

The latter made a survey of community health problems 27 years ago and recommended consolidation of city and county health staffs. A history of efforts since that time has just been compiled by the league.

"It should be emphasized that the advantages of consolidation of health districts in Lucas County would mean an effective and efficient delivery of basic health services to all citizens of the county," Dr. Mark summarized for the board.

"With the increasing availability of federal funds, more effective and broader use of such financial aid would be possible with reduction of administrative costs and an increase of service to the people.

"Consolidation would not endanger home rule, since what is at stake is not home rule but the assurance of adequate public health services to all communities in all communities.

"Financing of local health departments has always been a serious problem. Since the city of Toledo comprises 80 per cent of the population of Lucas County and 80 per cent of the taxable valuation, it is only logical that the Toledo district board of health be the agency that would be made responsible for health services to the rest of the county on a contractual basis of program-negotiated fees."

Dr. Mark told the board that he will leave Toledo with regret and will make his home in Florida because of a family health problem.

Gilbert H. Siegel, board president, named a committee of Burton MacRitchie, Dr. Saul R.

Kelson, and William N. Thomas, Sr., to seek a successor.

The salary to be paid will be left open. Dr. Mark receives \$24,766, considerably below the rate in comparable cities, according to preliminary findings of a study the board is making of staff salaries.

Dr. Mark has spent 32 years in public health work. He came here in February, 1958, from Minneapolis, where he was director of local health administration.

During his years here, Dr. Mark was president of the Ohio Public Health Association and of the Ohio Association of Health Commissioners.

He is a graduate of the University of Minnesota school of medicine and has a master's degree in public health from Harvard University.

Relocating At Medical College Discussed

The board discussed relocating the health department on the Medical College of Ohio campus, but asked that a close look be taken at transportation problems this might cause for inner-city residents who are primary users of health department facilities.

Dr. Kelson suggested that inquiry be made in Baltimore and Boston, which have similar arrangements.

Dr. Mark said that one solution to the transportation problem may be a model city neighborhood clinic proposed for development in conjunction with the medical school.

Rat Control Contract Being Prepared

Carter Toler reported that a model city rat control contract is in preparation and that a program is expected to get under way about Oct. 1, using 20 sub-professionals and 16 sanitation aids to help fight rats in the 450-block model city area. The program is federally financed at first.