

Lecture Vol.11 # 8 May 20, 1987 cover

Address
By
C. Everett Koop, MD, ScD
Surgeon General
Of the
U.S. Public Health Service
And
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Presented to the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
Bethesda, Maryland
May 20, 1987

From time to time in this archive, there appears a speech such as this, which really is a summary of what the Public Health Service is and what it does. It is probably surprising to people who have not worked in government how little one agency knows about how another works. This is even true in the Uniformed Services. The Army, Navy, and the Air Force know pretty much what each other's mission is, but even though the United States Public Health Service fills in for the military in time of war, very few people in the military know what the Public Health Service does. Practically no one knows how broad are its mandates and how much health care they actually provide, including for the disenfranchised, the poor, those with specific diseases, those who require the prevention of disease the promotion of health, all of the federal prisoners, the Coast Guard, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency. That speaks only if domestic activities; there are many international ones as well.

The reason that this lecture is included in this archive is that in the early years of this archive this same sort of lecture appears, but it is given at this time because the archives started with dates of six years earlier at the beginning of my term as Surgeon General, and although the general structure is the same there are specific differences in the way the Public Health Service is organized as of this delivery than it was previously. That seemed like a sufficient reason to provide the information for anyone interested about how that Public Health Service worked in the spring of 1987.