

At times it has been said that the St. Helens Hospitals might have carried more of this increase, but the annual returns show :—

		1944.	1947.
St. Helens Hospital, Auckland		646	1,026
St. Helens Hospital, Wellington		549	706
St. Helens Hospital, Christchurch		313	409
St. Helens Hospital, Invercargill		204	330

The number of midwives was increased by affiliating Alexandra Home to St. Helens Hospital, Wellington, half-way through the year, and this is being extended.

	1941.	1942.	1943.	1944.	1945.	1946.
Number of nurses qualifying as maternity nurses	228	261	293	316	335	410
Number of eighteen months' trainees qualifying as maternity nurses	53	76	59	61	62	56
Number of midwives qualifying ..	57	66	51	55	61	76

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

With the introduction of a visiting-nurse benefit through the Hospital Board system there has been a very rapid expansion of the Hospital Board district nursing scheme. Originally it was estimated that 1 nurse would be required for 4,000 of population, but it would appear as though 1 nurse to 6,000 will be sufficient, although the demands vary according to the conditions. For instance, in two adjacent districts where the type of hospital case varies because of scarcity of chronic beds the demand is just double ; also, a small country town of 7,000 people which has an adequate hospital has found it can hardly keep a District Nurse employed. This is largely because there are so few people in homes who can care for a bed-ridden patient between the visits of a nurse.

Now that the number of doctors has increased in the community it is most important that nurses should only pay an initial visit without the patient seeing a doctor and that every patient should be under medical care where at all possible.

The following is a summary of work of 80 Hospital Board District Nurses for the period 1st January, 1947, to 31st March, 1947 :—

Number of nurses (including 1 part-time only) 80

Total new cases referred from—

Hospitals		591
Private practitioners		1,325
Patients own home		3,488

Total number of cases seen at—

Nurses' centres		2,365
Patients own home		9,615

Total number of visits at—

Nurses' centres		2,376
Patients own homes		33,208