HEALTH PLANNING

There were two sessions on health planning; both were chaired by Gerald P. Rushton of the University of Iowa. The first paper, "Medical Maps: Some Design Suggestions for Mapping Health/Disease Statistics", was presented by David P. Bickmore of the Royal College of Art. The authors point out that the great majority of maps and atlases dealing with health or disease, portray administrative units shaded or colored to present particular statistical patterns. They contend that there is a cartographic alternative to the use of area colorings and that it lies in the use of "unconventional signs" such as windrose or clock symbols. An assessment is made of the pros and cons of such symbols in a medical mapping context.

The second paper, "A Graphics Oriented Computer System for Health Care Planning: Design and Development Principles", was authored by James Bohland and his colleagues from both the University of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Health Systems Agency. This paper describes a graphics oriented computer analysis system designed to meet the analytic needs of the Oklahoma Health Systems Agency. It describes the design principles and the structure of the system. The latter is derived from the objectives established for HSA's, and as such, the structure of the system should be applicable to other Health Systems Agencies.

"A Micro-Based Computer Mapping System: Applications in Health Planning" was presented by Edward Bosanac and his colleagues from West Virginia. The paper describes the use of a micro-computer in producing maps and their use in health planning. The micro based system is flexible, accessible to the non-programmer, and puts computer cartography within the price range of many health planning agencies. The system has been used to examine the geographic distribution of physician manpower requirements, demographic characteristics, and mortality statistics.

Henry Tom from the Bureau of the Census presented "The Applications of Automated Statistical Mapping to Health Statistics". The paper provides an explanation

of how computer mapping concepts/techniques are integrated and applied to spatial display, generation of cartographic artwork for publication and spatial analysis of digital cartographic files. Representative of these applications are specific examples of the automated statistical mapping of health statistics by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Gerald Rushton presented "Mapping the Predicted Need for Hospital Beds". The paper describes the results of a computer model in which different hospitals are made to reflect the expected 1985 county-level population distribution, different average lengths of hospital stay, different standard occupancy rates and different levels of hospital-use rates. The changing spatial distribution of bed need, illustrated on computer-produced maps, demonstrates the importance of each of these factors to policy discussions concerned with regulating the supply of hospital beds.