



**GROWS AGAIN . . .** This weekend marks the grand opening of a new store for the well known Al Terrence Carpet Co. at 13900 Ventura Blvd. in Sherman Oaks—the fourth last year was the firm's new Torrance store. The Sherman Oaks store will be under the supervision of Jerry Terrence, the firm's vice president.

ing of a new store for the well known Al Terrence Carpet in a planned chain of 15 carpet specialty stores. Opened in a planned chain of 15 carpet specialty stores. Opened in a planned chain of 15 carpet specialty stores. Opened in a planned chain of 15 carpet specialty stores.

## Expectant Mothers Need Medical Care

By K. H. SUTHERLAND, M.D.,  
County Health Officer

Though there has been a great improvement in the care of expectant mothers during the past several decades, current infant and maternal death rates make it apparent that there is still a great deal to be done. The provisional infant mortality rate in the United States for 1961 is 25.3 deaths under one year of age per 1,000 live births—which means that nearly 108,335 infant deaths occurred in this relatively brief span of 12 months. Maternal deaths for the year numbered about 3 per 10,000 live births.

THE 1961 INFANT mortality rate in the Los Angeles County Health Department jurisdiction was somewhat better than the national figure, being 22.4 per 1,000 live births or a total of 1,665 infant deaths, and slightly less than two maternal deaths occurred in every 10,000 live births. But all over the land, many of these maternal and infant deaths could have been avoided if adequate medical care had been available through the period of pregnancy. Studies on prenatal care show that even in metropolitan areas where medical services for expectant mothers are highly developed, about one third of the mothers do not receive the minimal amount of care during pregnancy. In these cases, both mother and baby, particularly the latter, are therefore exposed to hazards that could often be eliminated or prevented.

THE GREATEST medical neglect during pregnancy, which could be due to a lack of understanding of what is involved, occurred among individuals of low income and limited education.

Yet in other more favored groups, a considerable number of expectant mothers were fully aware that medical supervision should be started during the first three months of pregnancy but, for one reason, or another, failed to obtain it. Many factors entered into this procrastination, and a lack of information about the availability or accessibility of local health services was prominent among them. Concern regarding the costs that are sometimes incurred when medical services are obtained was also given as a reason for the failure to obtain care.

IN SOME CASES it was

found that women who already had had several children were reluctant to bother with medical care during the prenatal period. This was partly due to a lack of time or because earlier pregnancies had terminated without any difficulty to mother or child, thereby giving rise to the feeling that such care was not really needed. However, the fact that several uneventful pregnancies have taken place does not mean that later ones will be free of complications, as many women have found out to their sorrow.

While most women are financially able to obtain prenatal care from the family physician, expectant mothers in Los Angeles County who cannot afford such care may register at prenatal clinics conducted by local health departments. Moreover, those women who are eligible for part-pay clinic service, or insurance benefits and the like, may apply to local health departments for assistance in planning a program for prenatal and maternity care.

EXPECTANT mothers who register in public health prenatal clinics receive a thorough physical examination and medical supervision of a high standard. Moreover, patients are urged to continue regular visits to the clinics throughout the entire period of pregnancy in order that they may be assisted to maintain good health and, particularly important, so that any abnormal condition or disorder of pregnancy may be detected and treated before harm is done to either mother or baby.

Such medical care lessens the possibility of prematurity which occurs when the infant is born before the full nine-month period, and which is responsible for a high proportion of stillbirths and infant deaths.

Immunization against poliomyelitis as well as tuberculin tests are also available to expectant mothers registered for care in Los Angeles County Health Department prenatal clinics. Cervical cytology tests, so important in cancer detection, are given routinely.

CLASSES IN THE care of both mother and infant are regularly conducted by public health nurses, and the importance of proper nutrition during pregnancy is emphasized.

Six weeks after delivery of the baby the mother is given a physical examination to de-

termine if any condition exists that needs correction, and she is referred for care when necessary. Mothers are also encouraged to attend local well baby conferences so that the child may receive health supervision during the first years of its life.

Medical facilities and skills, however excellent, cannot benefit anyone unless they are used, and the expectant mother is advised to place herself under medical supervision during the first three months of

pregnancy and faithfully continue such care until she receives a medical discharge. It is the best protection she can procure for herself and her unborn infant.

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