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Title:
Health [ALP Health policy statement]

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3442

H E A L T H

The establishment, on a national basis, of a complete health service to be both curative and preventive in its activities
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General Practitioner service:

(a) Encouragement, with adequate subsidies, of group arrangements with medical practitioners for medical services to groups on either a salaries or a per capita basis.

(b) Repeal requirement that to obtain Commonwealth benefit the patient must be a subscriber to a registered society. Some financial responsibility to remain with the patient. Voluntary insurance to be encouraged.

(c) Provision of salaried medical service for sparsely settled areas and provisions of funds to subsidise medical and nursing services in country areas generally.

Hospitalisation:

(a) A national hospital service including hospitalisation without charge and without means test in public wards of public hospitals and equivalent financial benefits for patients in approved private hospitals and in intermediate and private wards of public hospitals.

(b) Repeal requirement that to obtain major portion of Commonwealth benefit the patient must be a subscriber to a registered society. Voluntary insurance to be encouraged.

Specialist Service:

Patients in all wards of public hospitals to have the option of utilising, without charge, the services of specialists (particularly surgeons) remunerated by salaried or sessional fee; the number of such specialists to be increased as demand for their service increases.

Mental Hospitals:

(a) The Commonwealth to finance expansion of the number of specialists and encillary personnel to treat inmates in mental hospitals.

(b) The Commonwealth to offer to the States the finance necessary to build mental hospitals to relieve the present overcrowding and to provide effective treatment.

Dental Service:

A complete free dental service for all children under the age of 16 years at Commonwealth cost, to be established by co-operation with the States and the dental profession.

Optical Service:

Free optometric service for all children under the age of 16 years at Commonwealth cost.

Deafness:

The aim shall be to make hearing aids available direct from Government factories to all who need them. For this purpose the Commonwealth Acoustic Laboratories to be extended as rapidly as possible. Meantime, such aid to be provided free to children under the age of 16 years, to pensions, and to others unable to pay for them.

HEALTH.

Preventive Medicine:

Active and substantial support for preventive medicine especially in its application to industry and for investigations of radiation hazards.

Research:

(a) The Commonwealth to sponsor visits to Australian medical schools by persons eminent in medicine from overseas.

(b) The Commonwealth to endow visiting Chairs and lectureships in the medical schools of the universities of Australia, to be temporarily tenable by overseas authorities in medicine.

Medical Education:

Provision of additional medical schools in the universities to ensure -

(a) medical classes small enough to enable personal attention and tuition to be given the students;

(b) a teaching load which does not inhibit research by the teaching staff.

Fellowships and Scholarships:

A system of Commonwealth medical and dental scholarships to be established to be available to approved undergraduates who contract to work for the purposes of the Commonwealth for a specific period after graduation; extension of fellowships at the postgraduate level, to be available without means test, and with an adequate living allowance.

Constitutional Power:

The Commonwealth Constitution to be amended to confer on the Federal Parliament power concurrent with that of the States in matters of health, including power to provide Australia-wide control of the standard and purity of drugs, and also the registration on an Australia-wide basis of medical, dental and allied personnel.

Pre-natal and Maternity Care and treatment to be provided without charge.

Domiciliary Services, radiating from hospitals, etc., to be provided for the treatment of chronic and convalescing patients in co-operation with their own physician. Extension of home help schemes.

Pensioner Medical Service to be available to all pensioners under the Commonwealth Social Services Act.

Federal Diagnostic Clinics to be established.

Artificial Limbs to be provided without charge to those in necessitous circumstances requiring them.