

# ACT Health Policy

## **Goal**

All New Zealanders have access to decent healthcare services, not ones that put them at risk.

## **Background - The Current Health System**

- Quite good for those who can afford private healthcare coverage.
- Producer's income depends less on service to patients than on meeting third party reimbursement requirements.
- Limited choice – individuals mainly have to take what is provided.
- Quality standards and outcomes are often poor– lack of fairness resulting in long waiting lists.
- Worst outcomes are for those living in poorest areas.
- Major staffing problems and bureaucratic.
- New Zealand is falling behind other developed countries.
- Lack of innovation and accountability.
- Lack of incentive for consumer to acquire knowledge.
- Rapid increases in costs – cost plus system applies.
- Rationing of technology and waste and inefficiency.
- Extra resources have not been matched by higher productivity.
- A caring not curing approach.
- Health has become *politicised*, even where it is not *political*.

## **Principles**

### **Equality**

Healthcare services that are there when you need them.

### **Patient first**

Ready access to healthcare services that are more accessible and more convenient for patients.

### **Open marketplace**

People should have a choice of competing healthcare products and policies in order to select the type of coverage best suited to their individual and family needs.

### **Doctors and Nurses**

The role of doctors and nurses and the opportunities open to them should be increased while the role of the Ministry of Health bureaucrats in Wellington would be replaced by a Health Authority (Health's equivalent of the Reserve Bank)

### **Quality**

More innovation and better use of technology will deliver healthcare services that provide real quality to consumers.

## Competition

Hospitals compete in the business of healthcare delivery by improving quality and lowering real prices.

**A commonsense approach to implementing these principles would involve the following:**

- Patients having the right to choose how they interact with doctors and hospitals not Government.
- Patients having the right to know.
- Greater consumer choice.
- Recognise that more government and more bureaucrats are not the answer for better healthcare.
- The answer lies in doctors, nurses and quality managers replacing bureaucrats at the centre of health.
- Increased competition in healthcare provision leading to reduced prices and improved quality.
- De-politicising decision making on the provision of funding of healthcare.
- Elimination of non-price rationing of health services leading to the virtual elimination of waiting times for elective treatments.
- Security against large and unpredictable health costs.
- Innovation with greater flexibility and diversity of services.
- Optimal insurance agreements.
- Production of relevant information on health services.
- Better allocation of resources.

## ***Policy Detail***

- New Zealanders may elect to stay in current system or opt out.
- Where a person elects to opt out, government role is to ensure that every New Zealander has the money to buy their own healthcare coverage.
- A reduction in tax paid, equivalent to what the government currently spends on people's healthcare, will be provided via the tax free income threshold. Tax reductions will be inflation proofed.
- Families and individuals will use the extra money from the tax reduction direct with the supplier or with any approved healthcare insurer they wish to for catastrophic cover.
- Healthcare insurance providers have their policies approved and capital adequacy checked by the Healthcare Authority in the same way Reserve bank licenses banks.
- The Healthcare Authority would establish guidelines of standards that hospitals would be expected to reach.
- Hospitals regularly assessed against these guidelines laid down by the Healthcare Authority.
- Doctors help patients make informed decisions (rather than serve the government).
- Hospitals compete in the business of delivering high quality healthcare at competitive prices.

If you believe that every New Zealander deserves the same high standard of treatment that currently the wealthy achieve through private insurance schemes, then **give ACT your Party vote, for a healthier New Zealand.**