

HEALTH POLICY

PREAMBLE

As stated in the Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organisation, health is “not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”, but “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being”. Furthermore, “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.”

Health for individuals is only possible in the context of a healthy environment and society. Recognising that health is both an individual and common good, the Greens will design policy to promote the health both of individuals and of communities and society more broadly.

VISION

The Greens will strive for health systems and policies that allow individuals and communities to achieve their greatest individual and collective physical, mental, and psychosocial potential. Like all public services, the right to health must be protected and promoted without negative discrimination based on race, religion, political belief, economic, social condition, or other arbitrary distinction. Furthermore, indicators of national and international progress must integrate quality of life and health metrics to guide policy, programs, and strategy at all levels of government.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Greens is to promote public health and healthcare services that are free from negative discrimination and realise individuals’ and communities’ right to health in all spheres of life. The objective is also to develop a new public health consciousness, which, through individual and collective action, will challenge vested interests and promote personal, social and political changes needed to achieve improved states of health.

ACTION PLAN

The action plan of the Greens will be to develop health services that emphasise prevention, promotion and the development of individual and community self-reliance, in addition to the treatment and cure of disease. Such services will be empowering, participatory and democratic and their development be guided by users' own perceptions of their health needs. Therefore, the Greens will –

Public Healthcare

- Ensure universal access to to quality publicly funded healthcare as a basic right
- Work towards universal access to publicly funded primary dental care
- Ensure universal access to publicly funded mental health services
- Ensure decisions about health services are based on the strongest possible evidence
- Support an integrative model of health care that includes complementary and alternative healthcare approaches that have been shown to be safe and effective
- Ensure that people of all economic backgrounds have access to resources and opportunities essential for good health and wellbeing

- Encourage preventive approaches and measures to alleviate social disadvantage
- Base primary healthcare on preventive measures, early interventions, and routine care
- Ensure that the healthcare system affirms rights to human dignity, personal choice, and privacy
- Ensure a comprehensive food labelling system that is strongly enforced, mandates full contents and nutritional disclosure, and allows only scientifically-verified health and nutritional claims
- Ensure culturally-appropriate and community-controlled health services for indigenous people and minorities
- Support voluntary vaccination as a method of disease prevention

Hospitals and Healthcare Professionals

- Support existing measures, programmes, and legislative actions that increase access to high quality, cost-effective medical services for all
- Ensure standard reasonable prices for medical goods and services
- Ensure that hospitals, clinics, and other care providers are democratically governed, including representation of healthcare workers, consumers, and other public interests
- Ensure clear and transparent disclosure of all fees, charges, and out-of-pocket costs, including the gap between health costs and health insurance rebates
- Closely integrate primary, secondary, and hospital care
- Ensure that care for minor illnesses and injuries is provided by community health centres
- Reduce rates of over-prescription
- Ensure an effective approach to the prevention of work and road related accidents and provision of injury rehabilitation services
- Increase access to health professionals in rural and remote areas
- Ensure remunerative wages for all health workers
- Prioritise patient safety, including strong enforcement against malpractice, negligence, and fraud
- Establish community health centres as focal points for self-help, community-based initiatives, primary healthcare, and health education and promotion programmes
- Ensure that community health centres provide walk-in facilities for patients with minor injuries and illnesses

HIV/AIDS

- Protect health of those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS
- Fight HIV/AIDS stigma with the help of short films, mass media, social media and other tools of communication
- curb new cases of HIV/AIDS with the help of sex education
- Especially educate young people about HIV/AIDS
- Reprioritise the fight against HIV/AIDS and ensure people's participation
- Improve the wellbeing of those living with HIV

Sexual and Reproductive Health

- Ensure individual freedom and moral autonomy in reproductive choices

- Provide access to family planning services and adequate funding for sexual health awareness campaigns, including greater access to free condoms and sexual health clinics
- Acknowledge that unintended pregnancies can be minimised through sex education, accessible contraceptive services and greater gender equality
- Ensure high quality, culturally appropriate maternity care during pregnancy, birth, and post-natal care, in accordance with WHO recommendations.
- Support access to natural birthing options for low-risk pregnancies
- Ensure that all women and their partners are offered support after birth to help deal with trauma and post-natal depression
- Encourage public buildings, workplaces and shops to provide breastfeeding facilities for women
- Ensure that all healthcare settings achieve baby friendly status, as established by UNICEF
- Ensure access for all women to legal, free and safe pregnancy termination services

Mental Health

- Implement programmes, education, and awareness campaigns to reduce mental health stigma
- Make available community-based support services to enable people with chronic mental and/or physical illnesses to live in and participate in their communities
- Encourage all local authorities to establish mental health centres
- Provide adequate funding for research into mental health service best practices
- Ensure that mental health services are sensitive to the needs of individuals on the basis of age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds
- Encourage schools to employ suitably trained counsellors, to whom children may talk in confidence
- Ensure that services to support child and adolescent mental health are properly funded and accessible
- Ensure that local authorities take preventative action in terms of well-known suicide spots

Informed Consent

- Ensure the right to informed consent for every individual, without force or coercion, relative to their own body for any medical, dental, pharmaceutical, or other procedure. The informed consent must be verifiable
- Legislate that the products derived from body tissue or organ extraction, and from insertion, injection, sampling, and imaging, cannot be used without informed consent of the patient
- Ensure the right to confidentiality of all medical, dental, and pharmaceutical record data for an individual unless otherwise decided by the individual without force or coercion
- Ensure that the patient has complete freedom of choice to accept or refuse treatment
- Ensure that the medical decisions taken towards the end of a patient's life (if allowed by law) are undertaken seriously and that the patient has a right to appoint individuals who will have access to their medical and other records
- Ensure that such patient's informed consent is clearly documented and notified

Regulation of Medicines and Prescription Charges

- Ensure that the safety and regulation of medicines are controlled by a single government agency
- Develop appropriate evidence-based methods of assessment for both synthetic pharmaceuticals and natural medicines, involving practitioners expert in their respective uses
- Ensure that an independent healthcare treatment agency provides assurance on the effectiveness of treatments and recommendations for new treatments to an appropriate authority
- Implement pharmaceutical and prescription price control mechanisms that remove cost as a barrier to accessing required treatment
- Exempt sanitary products from all sales taxes and/or value-added taxes, consistently with other basic necessities.
- Promote the use of generic pharmaceuticals where available

Health Services in Communities and Schools

- Increase funding of community services, enabling healthcare to be provided at home or in community-based facilities as far as possible
- Increase community services for people with a disability, are elderly, those with mental and physical health problems, and those with learning difficulties
- Ensure that each school has the funding and capacity to provide fresh, healthy, and preferably locally-sourced, lunches for their students
- Promote physical exercise and education in school curricula, and active extracurricular options for students outside school hours
- Create a national drug reduction strategy and develop more safe injection sites
- Develop education programmes on health and health issues at school or at work

Research and Development

- Implement a comprehensive programme of research into cost-effective care and prevention, and a rigorous system for the assessment, approval, regulation and marketing of pharmaceuticals, therapeutic goods, medical devices and other health therapies and technologies
- Support research into healthcare at all levels, especially public health, epidemiology, nursing and community care, and particularly in the community and primary care settings
- Support funding for research for both conventional and alternative/complementary care

Miscellaneous

- Promote an industry and agriculture sector respectful of environment and health
- Ban or regulate products in agriculture, manufacturing and industry that are dangerous for health, such as pesticides, glycols, mercury, and industrial chemicals
- Regulate the distribution of pharmaceuticals prescribed by doctors to track and prevent dangerous levels of over-medication and prevent addiction
- Ensure that workplaces provide appropriate occupational health services
- Ensure that LGBTIQ+ community specific health programmes are funded and able to identify and support at-risk individuals

- Ban advertising, funding and practice of any form of coercive therapy that aims to alter the sexuality or gender identity of an individual
- Reduce consumption of high sugar content foods and drinks

References:

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