



Policy: Health

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The Liberal Democrats will drastically reduce government interference in the right of individuals to manage their own health.

Policy

The Liberal Democrats will:

- Abolish Medicare, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and funding for public hospitals, which will be transferred to non-government ownership.
- Introduce a medical expenses subsidy for citizens that rises as medical expenses increase and falls as income and assets increase. This will be paid via the savings account scheme described in our Welfare policy. (If just half of government health-related spending were redirected to fund the medical expenses subsidy, the average subsidy would exceed \$2000 per Australian. The subsidy for the poor and chronically ill would be significantly higher.)
- Abolish intervention in private health insurance, including the private health insurance rebate and the 'community rating' laws that prevent health insurers from setting premiums on the basis of an individual's expected health costs.
- Abolish government involvement in delivery of health services.
- Maintain government involvement in the management of infectious diseases, including through vaccination.
- Abolish government prevention services (other than for infectious diseases).
- Abolish government funding of health research (while endorsing private funding).
- Privatised blood, organ and tissue coordination and supply agencies.
- Maintain government involvement in health service standards, health statistics, and radiation protection.

Discussion

We do not need government to maintain our houses, to maintain our cars, to maintain our wardrobe, or to maintain our bodies.

Most people can look after their own health, including through private insurance and membership of friendly societies. Family, community and charity can assist the least well off. And governments can help people look after themselves by reducing their taxes and freeing society to generate more jobs and higher incomes.

Nonetheless, more than sixty years of significant government interference in people's management of their own health has bred dependency and eroded civil society.

Renewing independence and civil society will take generational change.

The Liberal Democrats' health policy represents a responsible balance between the need to curtail government interference in people's management of their own health, with the need to continue assistance while a culture of independence and civil society takes root.

Replacing indirect and inefficient intervention with a medical expenses subsidy provided directly to needy individuals will reduce bureaucracy, reduce government spending, promote innovative health care and empower patients.

The Liberal Democrats will maintain government involvement in the management of infectious diseases, such as through vaccinations. Preventing and managing disease is in an individual's interests. However, preventing and managing infectious diseases is also in the interests of the broader community when the nature of contagion is indiscriminate.

The Liberal Democrats will abolish government prevention services (other than for infectious diseases), as people shouldn't be forced to pay for advice they might not want or need.

And we will abolish government funding of health research, as community willingness to donate towards health research is high.