

National Health Policy 1996

Introduction :

Sri Lanka has achieved a commendable health status measured in terms of traditional health indices in relation to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This has been mainly due to the social policies adopted by successive governments in the past few decades.

Health Policy :

The health policy of the Government will be directed at consolidating the earlier gains as well as adopting new policies to raise the health status of the people

The broad aim of the Health Policy is to :

- i. Further increase life expectancy by reducing preventable deaths due to both communicable and non-communicable diseases.
- ii. Improve the quality of life by reducing preventable disease, health problems and disability; and also emphasizing the positive aspects of health through health promotion.

In this respect the Government has identified the following diseases/ health problems as priority areas needing focused attention:

Maternal and Child Health problems, adolescent health, malnutrition & nutritional deficiencies, problems of the elderly, malaria, oral health, bowel disease, respiratory disease, mental health problems, physical disabilities, deliberate self-harm/ suicide, accidents, rabies, coronary heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, cerebrovascular disease, renal disease, malignancies, STD/HIV-AIDS, substance abuse and problems related to the family unit.

1. Improve the existing **preventive health** programmes and in addition develop more comprehensive coordinated and focused programmes that would:
 - (a) reduce the burden of disease in the community;
 - (b) enable early detection of preventable diseases/ health problems and their complications;
 - (c) focus on promoting positive health behaviour
2. Improve the existing **medical facilities** and develop additional services to meet a wider range and level of medical needs including rehabilitation and continuing care, both institutional and community base.
3. Health care will be made more **accessible** to the community on an equitable basis with provision for meeting specific health needs.
4. Improve the **quality** of health care to a level acceptable to both the community and service providers.
5. Health services activities and patient care will **respect the dignity of the individual** at all times.

6. The Government will remain committed to providing **basic health care free of cost** to the individual at the point of delivery, in State sector institutions.
7. The Government will ensure the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice.
8. Health care will be made more **efficient** and **cost effective**.
9. Develop and implement a **National Drug Policy** for the rational use and distribution of drugs.
10. Promote the **involvement of the community** in health care.
11. **Allocate resources** between provinces/ districts based on their health needs and national priorities.
12. The Health Ministry will strengthen **integrated approaches** with other Governmental and Non Governmental agencies to facilitate greater coordination for better health care.
13. The Government will facilitate the development and regulation of the **private health care sector** and promote better coordination with this sector.
14. Encourage **health systems research** and its application.
15. **Human Resource Development** will be supported and strengthened in keeping with contemporary needs.
16. Services and programmes will be introduced to meet the **emerging health needs** of the elderly and those affected by physical disabilities, mental health disorders, as well as the health problems of displaced populations.
17. Development of indigenous systems of medicines and homeopathy will be encouraged.
18. The Government is committed to allocate **additional funds** from Governmental sources and through alternative mechanisms of funding, towards meeting priority health needs especially in the areas of health promotion and prevention.

Implementation:

The National Health Policy will be implemented through the Central and Provincial Health Ministries.

The Ministry will issue documents on :

- i. Policy on Reproductive Health
- ii. Policy on Population

Measures will be taken to raise the health status of the population in general and minimize the impact of the above mentioned diseases/ health problems in particular by adopting the following health strategies.