



PRIME MINISTER

MACQUARIE NETWORK WEEKLY BROADCAST

BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON.
WILLIAM McMAHON, CH, MP.

30 AUGUST 1972

NURSING HOMES

Interviewer : Paul Lynch

Q. Prime Minister, taking calls from listeners to radio stations on this and other stations, it is quite obvious, I believe, that while everybody knows that your Government is planning to do something to assist people requiring nursing home care, most people, including those eligible for such care, don't yet know, two weeks after the Budget, exactly what this eligibility is and exactly what you will be doing for them.

PM: I can understand that and for that reason I asked my colleague the Acting Minister for Health to make a statement about it in the House yesterday. I will have a word with him, as soon as I get back to the House, to see if we can do more to make known to the public what the benefits are and how valuable they will be to people who require three or four different kinds of attention - that is for pensioners themselves, for non-pensioners and what we call domiciliary care - that is looking after people who require nursing attention in their own homes. We will also give substantial subsidies to organisations that will go to people's homes and give them nursing attention when needed.

Q. As I understand it -- I have had a look at the speech made by your colleague -- as I understand it, certain pensioners will, in fact, be able to get nursing home care without having to get anything out of their pockets or their family's pocket from January 1. Is that correct?

PM: That is correct. You have got two different kinds of benefit - one, intensive care and the other is ordinary care. Now the Commonwealth benefit will be in the first case - that is, intensive care, \$56 a week, and ordinary care, \$35. Now, this will mean that the pensioner himself, or herself, should be able to keep \$6 themselves, and that is a marked improvement on anything we have had before.

Q. Non-pensioners will still have to shell out, I understand, something like \$15 or \$20 a week?

PM: Yes. Well, between that -- I think it is about \$18 a week, because the non-pensioners will be covered by the National Health Insurance Scheme, and of course they will be expected to make some payment, remembering, of course, that some nursing homes will be treated as a home for them, and they will be living there and not in their own home or with a relative.

Q. Prime Minister, one point which I discovered from Dr Forbes' speech, about which I had not been aware before, and this is that the Federal Government is from now on going to insist that any nursing homes that want to raise their fees, and which are participants in this scheme, will have to justify any such increase. This is something of a departure.

PM: Yes, it is a departure, but I think a necessary one and a desirable one, too. Because if we are providing large sums of money, then we cannot have these institutions pushing up the fees that have to be paid immediately we increase the Commonwealth benefit. So we will require them to justify price increases, either before they become eligible for a payment, or if they want to increase the amount that has to be paid by a patient, they will have to justify that, too, or they will not get the increased benefit.

Q. Prime Minister, I am curious about one point, as discussed by the various Ministers of your Cabinet, and this is that not all nursing homes will be eligible for these new benefits, and only people who are attending the justified nursing homes will be enabled to get the new benefits. Now, why is this, and how many Australians do you think will be denied these new benefits as a result?

PM: Look, I couldn't give you those figures, because I haven't had that problem posed to me before. But if you are asking me why is it that you require them to justify their prices, then it is simply for this reason. The Commonwealth itself is making a substantial amount of money available in order that the new type of nursing attention can be given - whether it is domiciliary or whether it is in the home itself. And, similarly too, with other kinds of benefits. Now we just couldn't put up with the idea that if we granted an additional amount, as we have, say, in the case of New South Wales of \$10.50 for each pensioner requiring attention, that immediately the hostel, or the nursing home itself pushed up its fees so that there was no real benefit to the pensioner himself or herself, it would be intolerable. That is why we require them to justify the increase in prices.

Q. Prime Minister, thank you very much.

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Dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th inst.

in relation to the above mentioned matter.

The same has been referred to the appropriate authorities for their consideration.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours faithfully,
[Signature]

on this day of [Month] 1944.

Very truly yours,
[Signature]