

MEMO FOR CABINET
by the
MINISTER OF HEALTH

Financial Investigation in Cases of Notifiable Diseases

In accordance with Section 8.5 (b) (i) of the National Assistance Act, a person shall be entitled to institutional relief if he/she requires treatment for any disease notifiable according to law.

On the other hand, Section 12 (a) stipulates that a condition of any person's right to assistance is that he/she makes a claim therefore at an Office of the Department of Social Services. However the result of such investigation in cases of notifiable diseases has no bearing at all, as automatically, no charge is made.

It often happens that, if, the head of the household fails to attend for investigation, a bill at full rate is issued and the Medical and Health Department insists on payment not because the patient can pay, but on the sole plea that the head of the household did not submit himself to investigation.

The question therefore boils down to the fact that cases of notifiable diseases are subjected for financial investigation not for the purpose of assessment as to whether the head of the household has the means whereby to pay, or otherwise, but just to give details of income and belongings, which information has no bearing and serves no purpose at all.

This incongruity is all the more significant because many a time the patient is not told that he is suffering from a notifiable disease, such as cancer, and, therefore, he is not in a position to know that he is entitled to free treatment.

In the circumstances, Honourable Ministers may wish to agree that notifiable cases should be considered as entitled to free treatment irrespective of whether financial investigation has been carried out or not, and that necessary action be taken for the consequential amendments of the National Assistance Act.

MH 275/67.

31st March, 1969.