

Medicare — Save it!

The Federal Government is about to destroy Medicare in the interests of the private health industry's profits. Medicare is equitable; it is paid for by a uniform tax levy, with the wealthy paying more than the poor.

Howard's changes will shift the cost of health care onto individual families, depriving most Australians of the free access to health care that is our democratic right, especially in a resource-rich, wealthy economy such as ours.

Most Australians want the universal health care system and bulk billing to remain. We oppose the attack on bulk billing and call on all Australians to join the fight to save Medicare for the good health of all.

The Government, private health industry and drug companies want a two-tier health system, with one level of care for the wealthy and another lower level for the rest of us. This will maximise the profits of the corporations and free government of responsibility for health.

The Government is abandoning its role as a public service provider. It is destroying Australia's public sector and replacing it with a dog-eat-dog, everyone for themselves society.

What you can do:

1. Write to an ALP Senator, explaining how necessary Medicare is for you, and calling on the ALP to join with the Greens and Democrats in the Senate to block Howard's changes to the Medicare system.
2. Visit the CPA website for petitions, form letters and other materials for yourself and your friends to sign. Why not run a street stall with the petition. Write to your local paper.
3. Get your union or community group to adopt a resolution to retain Medicare. Send copies to the Government, the ALP in the Senate, the Greens and the Democrats.

A Communist Party of Australia leaflet.

**Contact the CPA at
65 Campbell Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010**

Ph: 9212 6855.

E-mail: cpa@cpa.org.au Website: www.cpa.org.au



The Communist Party of Australia wants "people first" policies:

- The maintenance and extension of Medicare, retaining bulk-billing for everyone and no co-payment.
- The \$3.6 billion currently used to prop up the private health insurance industry to be switched over to supporting Medicare and the public hospital system.
- The Medicare levy to be increased so that doctors' remuneration can be increased and they can once again support bulk billing.
- Extension of Medicare to provide a national dental service.
- Federal Government to control prices charged by drug companies and to provide additional support to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
- Increased Federal support to the public hospital system.
- A ten percent cut in the \$43 million a day, that Australia currently spends on the military would fund all our public health needs.

What the Howard Government wants:

- Introduce a so-called "co-payment" system and eliminate bulk billing which will destroy Medicare; free health care for all will end — patients will pay through the nose if they want decent health care and only a few of the very poor will still be covered (for minimum care) by a remnant Government-backed public health system.
- Everyone to be obliged to take out private health insurance — private insurances companies and the private hospital industry will make a fortune while continuing to be subsidised by the Government.
- The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to be cut back, allowing "the market" (i.e. the big private drug companies) to set the prices people will have to pay for medicines and drugs, helping the companies make huge profits.
- By abandoning responsibility for health care, the Howard Government expects to free up funds for more military adventures like Afghanistan and Iraq.