

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 25, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
UPON SIGNING  
THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR  
HEALTH CARE ACT

THE CABINET ROOM

1:53 P.M. EST

Secretary Mathews, and your associates in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare:

As you well know, I am asking the Congress today to enact the Financial Assistance for Health Care Act, which will consolidate Medicaid in 15 categorical Federal health programs into the \$10 billion block grant to our various States.

I am proposing that future Federal funding for this new program be increased in increments of \$500 million annually. My proposal is designed to distribute Federal health care dollars more equitably and to increase State control over health spending.

My proposal also recognizes what I consider to be a more appropriate Federal role in providing financial assistance to State and local Governments to improve the quality and the distribution of health services.

Let me emphasize that no State will receive less Federal money in the future under my block grant proposal than it received in fiscal year 1976 under the programs being consolidated.

My consolidation proposal will allow the States far greater flexibility in providing for the delivery of health care services to those with low incomes. It eliminates the requirement for State matching funds.

My proposal is designed to reduce Federal red tape, increase local control over health spending and expand public participation in health planning. It is essential to continuing our national progress in the field of health.

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I strongly urge the Congress to take affirmative action quickly and positively on this important proposal.

Mr. Secretary, I am signing the message to the Congress so that they can move quickly and, as I said, positively on this very important proposal.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 1:56 P.M. EST)