Establishment of national health service in the uk

Parts of the World, Europe

Before 1945 and before the NHS, if a person from any background needed to receive any kind of medical treatment they would have to pay for that treatment or they would not be diagnosed and or treated. This had catastrophic results on society for a few reasons. Control of infection spread was near impossible. The villages and homes were overcrowded and if one person were to become sick, they would not be able to be treated therefore this would spread to others and this would result in some possible deaths.

The main infections were tuberculosis, measles and scarlet fever these killed thousands of people per year. Not only was there infection but people would not be able to afford fully insulated home or proper clothing so people, especially the young or old would be freezing to death. The young were so at risk in terms of there health that not only would they be infected but they would also have rotten teeth and a weak heart. Most were under the age of 12 and would be lucky to live longer than this age.

Although the poor could not really afford the GP's who worked within these villages but there was a low chance of seeing them as there was 1 GP for every 18, 000 people. This was due to the fact that GP's in upper class areas had a guarantee of getting paid and by more people.

At this time only really, the upper middle class and upper class could afford the medical bills set by the NHS. The only type of medical insurance for the working class was the National Insurance Act which was brought into place in 1911 by David Lloyd George who at the time was chancellor of the exchequer. This insurance act provided lower income males in manual labour jobs, such as miners, to have some sort of health care however this did not

cover the rest of the family. That was up until July 5th, 1948. The National Health Service (NHS) was launched in hope to better the Society and its people. Aneurin Bevan, who was elected the Minister of Health in 1945, had a strong belief that healthcare should be available to all, regardless of their wealth. Bevan whom was born on 15th November 1897, grew up as a part of a working-class family in Tredegar, Monmouthshire, Wales.

The NHS had 3 core principles which were created 70 years ago remain applicable to today. These were:

- That it meets the needs of everyone.

- That it be free at the point of delivery

- That it be based on clinical need and not ability to pay.

When the NHS was first established, it covered all healthcare including dental care and eye health which included prescribed glasses. However, in 1951 the government introduced prescription charges which meant that the delivery of the NHS no longer relied on a person's ability to pay. The NHS " was dispensing 228 million items per year and the government raised the charge to 1 shilling per item to compensate".

By 1952 there was a lot of controversy as well where they also abolished the free dental care and prescribed glasses were. By 1988 free eye tests were completely taken from NHS care and then in 1999, it was decided that those over 60 could receive free sight test.