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**Editorial**

**New health policy**

***Well-intentioned but challenging***

The much awaited National Health Policy, 2011 aimed to ensure good health for all has been approved by the government. Although it is a belated fulfillment of one of the AL government's major election pledges it is to be commended for some of its good, forward-looking features.

The policy envisages introduction of homoeopathy, unani and herbal treatment in all public hospitals alongside the allopathic medicare. Given the proper opportunity to flourish alongside the allopathic mode, the alternative streams should become more popular among the poor to middle income groups in the country and receive the recognition they deserve.

A bold decision has been taken to ban private practice by resident doctors, emergency medical officers and 'non-clinical' doctors of government hospitals. This is to ensure round-the-clock health service to patients who are in many cases made to suffer due to absence of doctors at public hospitals. The government has decided to provide additional allowances by way of discouraging private practice.

The introduction of health insurance for public and private service holders and distribution of health cards among the poor to ensure free health care to them at all government hospitals augur well. It promises service delivery to people who have the greatest need for it.

The policy also aims to control medicine prices, coordinate family planning programmes, reduce child and mother morality rates and modernise medical waste management. This is where the implementation capacities of the government will be really tested.

Since this sector is a huge one and calls for participation of all individuals and organisations, the NGOs should come in handy to work alongside the government in achieving the targets.

We hope the health council to be headed by the Prime Minister will play a decisive role in implementing policy measures to ensure health for all.