

is apparent to anyone who wishes to make a fair appraisal that a major tax increase could not be tolerated on the heels of last year's tax reform, which provided almost \$100 million of new revenue for the subdivisions. The Legislature's opinion is easily discernible in the deep additional cuts it just made in the administration's health budget. Therefore, I cannot accept as valid the Committee's conclusion that the citizens of Maryland should have been made to bear the burden of increased taxes this year to support Medicaid.

On the other hand, the Committee has done an excellent job in facing the alternatives. It has recommended some sound steps to provide the greatest amount of care to the greatest number of citizens within the fiscal means available.

As Governor, I must be cognizant of all of the needs of our citizens — not only in the field of health services, but in education, welfare, public safety and in numerous other areas. While I am deeply concerned that we cannot afford to continue the total Medicaid program beyond July 1, on its presently unrestricted basis because of the spiraling and inestimable costs of hospital and medical charges, I am confident that the Nelson Committee will ultimately find a long-range answer to the problem that lies within fiscal responsibility, and at the same time assures proper medical care for the medically indigent. The Committee has already presented some recommendations that meet the problem temporarily.

The Health Department and members of my staff have continually been in contact with Federal officials to ease the restraints and difficult regulations that govern this program. Although we have not yet gained much headway in this respect, I remain hopeful that the concerted effort of many states facing this problem will bring about a change in attitude toward what has essentially become a problem created by rigidity of Federal regulations.

While I am concerned — deeply concerned — that the sick poor be properly cared for, I am dedicated to the premise that only those unable to financially care for themselves shall use these dollars. Abuses must be eliminated so that the tax burden shall be only that required for the purpose of the program.

I support fully the efforts of Dr. Nelson and other members of his Committee as they seek a permanent and practical solution to the problem.