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**Ex-Surgeon General Charges
'Chaos' in Nixon Health Policy**

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 9—Dr. Jesse L. Steinfeld, former Surgeon-General of the United States Public Health Service, under President Nixon, said today that the Administration had been dragging its feet in implementing medical programs needed by the country and that Federal health affairs were in "a kind of chaos."

He said that efforts to reform and revitalize Federal health efforts had had more form than substance during his three years as Surgeon General, because of what he called a lack of interest, leadership and money.

Dr. Steinfeld, who was not reappointed to his post earlier this year and for whom a suc-



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cessor has not been named, also broke with the Administration by coming out in support of the national health insurance proposal backed by liberal Democrats, rather than the version being put forward by Republicans.

He will appear at a news conference here tomorrow to endorse the more liberal version, which is co-sponsored by Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, and Representative Martha W. Griffiths, Democrat of Michigan. Organized labor supports their proposal.

In an interview, Dr. Steinfeld said that two years ago he had been given a directive from Mr. Nixon through John D. Ehrlichman, the President's former domestic affairs adviser, and Elliot L. Richardson, who was then Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, to draw up a series of health options and programs "in advance of the 1972 elections."

He said that those selected ended up as "high visibility, low cost programs" and that even these did not advance very far. Among the programs then selected, he said, were those dealing with the following:

Health insurance for unemployed and low-income workers. The resulting family health insurance plan, which the Administration introduced and then withdrew, was criticized in Congress as having levels of benefits that were far too low.

Minimum standards of coverage offered by health insurance

carriers. The Administration has not reintroduced this legislation.

Malpractice insurance for doctors. A commission was formed and a report issued, but the concept of reforming the problem of high premiums for doctors and higher costs to the health system has not been resolved.

Mass screening for hypertension. The aim was to use mass detection methods to detect high blood pressures in large populations and to refer those suffering from it for treatment.

Dr. Steinfeld attributed what he regarded as the failure to draw up and put into operation effective health programs to the lack of planning specialists at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the opposition to increased spending by the Office of Management and Budget.

'Team Player'

He said it was "ironic" that the then head of the budget office, Caspar W. Weinberger, was now the H.E.W. Secretary.

"Mr. Weinberger may be a better team player from the Administration's point of view, but social programs need an advocate in the Cabinet and there is none," the former Surgeon General said.

Dr. Steinfeld, a cancer specialist who now is director of the department of oncology—the study of tumors—at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn., named a variety of programs that were started but are moribund.

He cited the creation of the National Health Service Corps under a bill passed by Congress and signed by the President almost three years ago. The

aim was to use Federal funds and influence to place doctors, dentists and nurses in the urban slums and the rural areas that are critically short of health professionals.

Yet the program has spent only a fraction of the \$50-million authorized for it by Congress and suffers, according to Dr. Steinfeld, from "a lack of leadership and interest."

Dr. Steinfeld, whose outspoken remarks and feisty character had not endeared him to the Administration during his tenure, also defended the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service from attempts by both the Johnson and Nixon Administrations to end it.

High health officials in both Administrations have viewed the Commissioned Corps as anachronistic and unnecessary because of the introduction of Medicare and Medicaid and the widespread enrollment in private health insurance.

Nucleus for Professionals

Dr. Steinfeld argued, however, that the Commissioned Corps was needed as the nucleus around which Federal health professionals should group.

One of Dr. Steinfeld's main complaints, directed at both Democratic and Republican Administrations, is that there has never been an over-all health strategy for the country although costs soar and services do not improve.

"The Commissioned Corps has been all but destroyed," he said. "It ought to be rebuilt to have the professional talent to draw upon when needed—people insulated from politics."

He said the appointment to Federal health posts for political reasons of persons outside the Government should be replaced by the promoting of Federal health officials from within.

As for national health insurance, Dr. Steinfeld said he favored the Kennedy-Griffiths bill "because it starts fixing responsibility for the quality of care of the people receiving benefits." The bill would mandate reforms of the health care system over a period of years.

"The Kennedy-Griffiths bill would not only pay bills, it would try to better the system," he added.