

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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State of Maine
Senate Chamber
Augusta, Maine 04333

December 14, 1988

Bonnie Post, Chair
Special Select Commission on
Access to Health Care
State of Maine
Department of Human Services
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Ms. Post,

As you are aware, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Expenditures is in the process of drafting its final report to the Legislature.

The Commission's recommendations will include encouragement of different types of demonstrations and experiments which further the goals of accessible, affordable and quality health care.

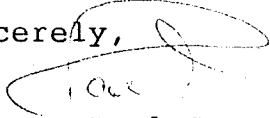
A specific example involves hospitals that are unlikely to remain viable as acute general hospitals because of low patient volume. When the closure of such a hospital would cause access problems due to no acute general hospital being available within a reasonable travel distance it may be appropriate to have the hospital continue as a health care facility, but at a lower level than a general acute hospital. The State of Montana has a proposal to the Health Care Financing Administration for such lower level facilities, which would provide some basic inpatient care as well as outpatient care, and have lower licensing requirements so that costs could be reduced. Federal waivers would be needed to enable the facilities to be paid by Medicare for basic forms of inpatient care. This model, with some modifications, may be appropriate for Maine.

Blue Ribbon Commission members are particularly concerned with the feasibility of providing a different category of

licensure for lower level facilities. After some discussion at the last meeting, it was agreed to refer the issue to the Special Select Commission on Access to Health Care. We would appreciate your consideration of this recommendation and the feasibility of applying it to Maine.

We look forward to a continuing dialogue.

Sincerely,


Sen. N. Paul Gauvreau
Chair
Blue Ribbon Commission on
Health Care Expenditures

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