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1973
BLAINE HOUSE
CONFERENCE ON AGING

A Report of
Conference Proceedings
and
Recommendations

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1973
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CONFERENCE ON AGING

A Report of Conference Proceedings
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STATE OF MAINE
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AUGUSTA, MAINE
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KENNETH M. CURTIS
GOVERNOR

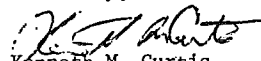
Dear Fellow Citizens:

On November 28th and 29th, 1973, the 4th Annual Blaine House Conference on Aging was held in Augusta sponsored by the Maine Committee on Aging and the Office of Maine's Elderly. The purpose of the conference was to analyze specific problems of concern to Maine's elderly and propose recommendations to the Special Session of the 106th Legislature.

For the first time, the conference was expanded into a two day session. The state-wide Task Forces on Aging met throughout October to define key areas of concern and developed these into topics for a workshop session prior to the usual General Session of the conference. About 250 elderly met all day with numerous professionals as resource people and developed resolutions for consideration by the General Session which convened on November 29th in the Augusta Civic Center. More than a thousand delegates from across the State of Maine gathered to share their ideas and listen to workshop reports and an address by Senator Muskie.

The actions taken by the 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging are specific and clearly reasoned and deserve full attention at all levels of government. I have read these resolutions and carefully reviewed each of the statements in this report. It is my hope that all of you will do the same and join me in endorsing and supporting the laudable efforts of our elderly citizens. They set an example for us all by their total commitment to solving their own problems. Those problems are expressed within and the solutions proposed demand that we all work together to achieve them for the betterment of our elderly and ourselves. The elderly have set the pace. It is now our charge to join them with positive action to achieve their goals.

Sincerely,


Kenneth M. Curtis
Governor

KMC/pg



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04330

DEAN FISHER, M. D.
COMMISSIONER

December 14, 1973

The Honorable Kenneth M. Curtis
Governor
State House
Augusta, Maine 04330


Dear Governor Curtis:

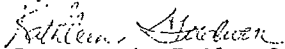
It is a pleasure to present the 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging report to you. This document is a comprehensive account of the conference drawn from workshop position papers, statements of invited speakers, and resolutions adopted by the 1000 conference delegates.

On behalf of the Department of Health and Welfare, the Maine Committee on Aging and the Office of Maine's Elderly, we express our deepest thanks to all participants. Their constant efforts assure continual reform of the problems of Maine's Elderly.

It is our hope that this report is widely read and that its recommendations are implemented for in the words of the "Credo of the Elderly", "we intend to bring benefits not just to ourselves, but to all generations in fulfillment of our personal responsibility to help improve the quality of life of all human beings."

Sincerely,


Dean Fisher, M.D., Commissioner
Department of Health & Welfare


Representative Kathleen Goodwin, Chairman
Maine Committee on Aging

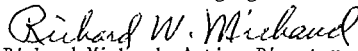

Richard Michaud, Acting Director
Office of Maine's Elderly

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INTRODUCTION

The 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging was held on November 28th and 29th in Augusta for the purpose of discussing key areas of concern to Maine's elderly and making recommendations to the Special Session of the 106th Legislature. The conference was an extensive one with a full day of workshops preceding the General Session. This document is a report to the people of Maine and the State Legislature in hopes that they may better understand the workings of the conference and endorse its recommendations.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of over 1,000 elderly delegates from across the state. Special thanks are due to the workshop participants. Their work was the foundation of the conference and although their number, two hundred and fifty, makes it impossible to thank them all by name, their efforts are very much personalized in the recommendations enclosed. We have however given particular recognition to the workshop chairmen, vice chairmen and resource people under whose leadership the workshops produced significant results. Although the workshop chairmen spoke to the General Session, their statements were informal and primarily consisted of the presentation of the resolutions. The statements therefore have not been included but are represented in both the planning papers and resolutions.

On reading this report, it is important to realize that the planning papers represent the combined efforts of the resource people as compiled by the Office of Maine's Elderly. These papers are not necessarily to be interpreted as position papers, but rather as informative documents developed to outline problems and propose possible alternatives to precipitate workshop discussion.

The actual recommendations adopted by the conference are listed verbatim at the conclusion of the report. Copies of this report may be obtained by contacting the Maine Committee on Aging, State House, Augusta, Maine 04330.

Members of the Maine Committee on Aging

Miss Blanche Applebee
Mr. Arnold Briggs
Mr. Harold Collins
Miss Helen Dunn
The Honorable Kathleen Goodwin, Chairman
Mr. David Graham
Mrs. Germaine Hebert
Mrs. Margaret Jones
The Honorable Jane Kilroy
Mr. Jack Libby
Miss Leora Prentiss
The Honorable Elden Shute
Dr. Harold Stevens
Mr. Henry Stone
Mrs. Helen Sweet

Office of Maine's Elderly

Mr. Richard Michaud, Acting Director
Mr. Paul Gagnon
Mr. Waldo Gilpatrick
Mr. William Inlow
Mr. James Martin
Mr. Leonard Nemeth
Mrs. Betty Patten
Miss Helen Philbrook
Mr. Steven Polederos
Miss Trish Riley
Mr. Brad Ronco
Mr. John Shaw
Mrs. Jane Stauffer
Mrs. Estelle Weston

PERSONNEL AND PLANNING PAPERS

**Pre-session Workshops
Blaine House Conference on Aging
Holiday Inn, Augusta
November 28, 1973**

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

Workshop Personnel

Chairman: Harold Collins, Executive Director,
Western Older Citizens Council

Vice Chairman: Leora Prentiss, Maine Committee on Aging

Resource People: Robert Frates, Legislative Assistant

Charles Jacobs,
Special Assistant to the Governor

Thomas Eldridge,
Data Processing Unit, Income Maintenance

Planning Paper Prepared for 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging

WORKSHOP ON SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)

Without question, the most complex and nebulous issue facing Maine's elderly at the 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging is supplemental security income. This is an issue clouded by administrative detail and confused by the difficulties of changing from state to federal responsibilities. There are many questions unanswered. What we do know is simply this: legislative action concerning SSI is mandatory in the special session for if the state fails to act to appropriate the necessary funds to fill the gap between new federal allocations to AABD and previously existing state allocations, the State of Maine risks the loss of millions of Medicaid dollars.

But what is the "best" action to take? There is a plethora of options, yet determination is nearly impossible amidst the current confusion. Action must be taken soon, yet until the federal government finalizes its policy, the legislature cannot commit itself to any one course of action. Time is closing in. When the wheels of legislative action are finally set in motion, decisions must be made quickly. Therefore it is the obligation of this workshop to provide the legislature with specific guidelines so that they CAN move quickly without error or misrepresentation of our needs.

The following paper briefly discusses the history of SSI, speculates about potential problems and concludes with one specific recommendation which was developed by the income maintenance unit of the Department of Health and Welfare. Please recognize that this is the interpretation of one department — it is a possible solution and needs your utmost consideration, whether you reject, amend or approve.

The United States Congress in October 1972, passed major "Welfare Reform" legislation which establishes a National Financial Assistance Program for Aged, Blind and Disabled. The new law, P. L. 92-603, grew out of President Nixon's welfare reform package, H. R. 1.

At the present time each state has its own program of aid to aged, blind and disabled in accord with current regulations of Title XVI of the Social Security Act. In Maine the federal government reimburses the state approximately 70% of the costs of grants.

The level of assistance varies widely from state to state and region to region. Under the new system, a basic uniform payment will be made to eligible individuals monthly by the Social Security Administration. States in which current payments exceed the national level defined in P. L. 92-603 are free to supplement the minimum.

The new program will be known as the Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI). It will be administered by the Social Security Administration with full federal funding from the general revenues for basic benefits. Uniform national standards for aged, blind or disabled persons with no other income (and with limited resources) have been established at a level of \$130 per month for an individual or \$195 per month for a couple. The first \$20 of any income (including Social Security benefits) will be disregarded in determining need, as well as the first \$65 plus one half above that of earned income.

Thus, aged, blind, or disabled persons having an income of \$20 from Social Security or other sources will receive an income of no less than \$150 for an individual or \$215 for a couple. Eligible individuals who are in a hospital or nursing home and receiving Medicaid assistance will be eligible for payments of up to \$25 a month in lieu of their regular benefits.

Anyone eligible to receive benefits under this program will not be eligible to receive food stamps or donated commodities. A state may elect, however, to supplement the federal payment from state or local funds, with no federal matching. Regulations pertaining to food stamp and donated commodity eligibility may

change prior to 1/1/74 making these people eligible for stamps and commodities.

The new legislation does not allow benefits for non-citizens, nor for people residing out of the United State boundary (we have some recipients actually living in Canada in boarding or nursing homes from municipalities along the Canadian border). In addition, the flat grant (\$130 a month + \$20 a month disregard; \$195 for a couple) of certain income hits people receiving state assistance whose living arrangements are such that their needs are over \$150 a month for an individual and \$195 a month for a couple. These are man and wife, persons with high rent or high mortgage, persons in boarding homes, persons in nursing homes and persons with special need of housekeeping services. It is evident that the citizens of Maine and their elected representatives wish to meet these needs insofar as possible.

Recent amendments to this new law make it mandatory for all states to supplement these new Social Security payments for current recipients of state assistance so that no person will receive total income less than he was receiving in December 1973. State supplementation of this program for people who apply after January 1, 1974, is not mandatory.

The following is a summary of one plan submitted to the Governor and legislature for financial supplementation and Medicaid:

CASES ON STATE AND AABD ROLLS ON DECEMBER 31, 1973

All cases on the rolls on December 31, 1973, will be converted to the new supplemental security income program. The basic supplementary security income benefits of \$130 per individual and \$195 for a couple with a \$20 disregard of any income will mean that some of the people now receiving state assistance will end up with more money (estimate 50%). It also means that without a supplementation by the state some people (estimate 50%) would end up with less money.

In order that no one ends up with less income than he or she had when receiving state AABD, we plan to forward funds to the Social Security Administration monthly so that this money will be

added to the monthly SSI check the individual receives from the federal government. This affects basically people in boarding facilities, high rent areas and with special needs. We plan at this time to sign an agreement with the Social Security Administration to have them administer this program for us and to do the periodic reviews necessary. These people will continue to be eligible for Medicaid (see section on Medicaid following). The basic difference is that those people who received a state check in December 1973, will receive a federal check in January 1974.

PERSONS APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE AFTER JANUARY 1, 1974

For those persons becoming 65, disabled or blind and needing financial assistance after January 1, 1974, the new supplemental security income program will be a primary and major resource. However, many people will still have needs higher than recognized by Social Security (high rent, boarding home, nursing home situations, etc.)

To meet these needs insofar as possible we plan to continue to have a state administered program of aid to aged, blind and disabled. The major difference will be that this program will be dependent upon 100% state funding with no federal matching.

For people applying for help after January 1, 1974, we will use the same application forms we have been using and will use the same authorization forms and procedures. We will make some minor changes in policy:

1. Removal of some of disregards around income.
2. Mandatory criteria that a person applying for state assistance apply for federal supplemental security income as well as regular Social Security benefits.
3. Automatic acceptance of medical eligibility if a person is receiving disability from Social Security and/or certain veterans benefits.
4. Establishing disability using Social Security definition of disability.
5. Determining disability by our local regional offices.
6. Some removal of special circumstances allowances.

Anyone applying for AABD after January 1, 1974, should be referred to Social Security at the time the application is received and then the application processed taking into consideration any benefits he receives from supplemental security income will affect his state grant.

MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY

All persons receiving supplemental security income will be eligible for state Medical benefits even though they have not or are not receiving a state financial assistance grant.

We will receive a monthly tape listing all these people. Medicaid eligibility cards will be mailed to these people from Augusta monthly as long as they receive supplemental security benefits.

Some people with high Social Security benefits (mostly boarding home and nursing home people) will not be eligible for supplemental security benefits from the federal government. These people will apply for state administered benefits. If financially eligible for state benefits or nursing home care they will be covered for Medicaid. They will receive their Medicaid eligibility notification in the same manner as people are now receiving notification when eligibility is found to exist.

We are reviewing the criteria that states a person with over \$312 per month income is not eligible for Medicaid. This figure may have to change. However, we are exploring the possibility of making all persons eligible in nursing homes if their income is less than their nursing home costs. If we do this we would only be able to claim matching for federal funds on those cases where income is less than X dollars. If this is done the claiming of matching and identification of cases where matching cannot be claimed will be done in Augusta and would not involve additional work for our regional staff.

Legislation is being prepared for the above programs. Total costs are calculated at from 5 to 6 million dollars annually.

HOUSING AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Workshop Personnel

- Chairman:** Margaret Jones, Maine Committee on Aging
- Vice Chairman:** Sister Marie Therese, Administrator,
Deering Pavillion, Portland
- Resource People:** James Mitchell, Director,
Maine Housing Authority
- James Martin, Director
Senior Housing Services
- J. Gregory Shea, Regional Director,
Dept. of Health & Welfare, Lewiston
- Rep. Kathleen W. Goodwin, Chairman,
Maine Committee on Aging

Planning Paper Prepared for 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging

WORKSHOP ON HOUSING

"Housing for the elderly assumes increasing importance with age and retirement as more of the older person's time is spent in the home. Decreased mobility due to illness and lack of transportation means restriction of activity to the home. Housing must not only be considered important because of this increased utilization of housing by the elderly, but also it may be assumed that the good housing of older people will assist in reducing the incidence of illness, disability, and mental and social breakdown among the elderly, who, because of the nature of the aging process, are especially vulnerable."

This quotation from STEPS FOR MAINE'S ELDERLY clearly points to the importance of good housing for Maine's elderly. The problem in assuring good housing is basically two-fold. First, we must insure that those people who wish to and are capable of remaining in their own homes are allowed to do so, and secondly, we must develop programs whereby new, subsidized housing can be erected for those elderly who are unable or unwilling to remain in their own homes.

Simplistically, if an elderly citizen wishes to remain in his own home, he must be capable of supporting it both financially and with physical upkeep.

FUEL

Of primary concern to all citizens this year is the energy crisis. Yet those elderly who are recipients of aid to the aged, blind and disabled will be particularly affected. Within the next few months home heating costs for a significant number of people

will rise from \$390.00 to \$450.00 OVER AND ABOVE last year's costs. This is based upon a consumption of 1,900 gallons with a price fluctuation from a low of 18c per gallon last year to a high of 40-45c per gallon this year. Local prices currently are 32c per gallon. Given the nature of the fuel crisis, citizens will not be able to seek out lower prices and they MUST pay their bills.

It seems evident that a significant number of AABD clients will find themselves without funds to meet these additional costs. The Department of Health and Welfare will be able to adjust budgets only for those whose heating cost is included in their rental amount. For example, a \$20.00 increase in rent per month for these people can be accounted for in full. On the other hand, those AABD recipients who pay their own heating costs cannot get an adjustment from health and welfare because the cost is not included as rent.

Clearly this is a priority item. It is a critical issue in basic day to day existence. If an elderly citizen cannot pay his fuel bill his only recourse is to go without and risk serious illness, hospitalization and intolerable living conditions or to deprive himself of other necessities such as food, socialization to avoid isolation, some medical necessities, warm clothing, etc. We simply cannot allow this and must demand immediate legislative action to avoid this drastic potential problem.

Therefore,

Be it resolved that the Blaine House Conference on Aging urge the legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to cover fuel costs for AABD recipients whose fuel costs are not covered in rent fees.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Another major issue affecting elderly homeowners is property tax and rent refund reforms. In 1971, as a result of a strong lobbying effort by senior citizens, the 105th Legislature enacted the first meaningful property tax and rent refund program for the elderly, yet while it provided senior citizens significant relief in

many cases, it was based on an income supplement formula which gave identical refunds to people with similar incomes and dissimilar tax or rent burdens. For instance, the person with an income of \$2,000 received \$140 whether his taxes were \$150 or \$400. The most glaring inequity then was a disregard for the actual tax burden.

In 1973, the 106th Legislature made several changes in the tax refund law, the most significant being adoption of a "circuit breaker" formula, which simply means that when taxes or rent exceed a certain percentage of one's income, there is an overload. The state then breaks the circuit by refunding the amount considered excessive.

Returning to the two hypothetical cases previously mentioned with incomes of \$2,000 — the person with taxes of \$150 was now refunded \$90 and the person with taxes of \$400 was refunded \$340. The principle involved is that neither can afford more than \$60 for property taxes.

Other amendments adopted in 1973 were raising the income limit to \$4,500 for a single person and \$5,000 for a couple, reducing eligibility for men to age 62 to coincide with that for women, excluding the homestead from total assets, and raising the percentage of rent considered going for property taxes.

While the formula being implemented this year is based on a far more equitable principle it has resulted in an average increase of \$46 per refund; we have found that some low income elderly have been hurt if they live in towns with low tax rates. This is especially true for the elderly in rural areas of the state.

Perhaps the time has come to recognize that the very low income elderly should be entirely relieved from the burden of property taxes. The attached amendment for the consideration of the delegates to the 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging proposes that people with incomes of \$1,500 or less be given complete rebates up to \$450. At \$2,500, a rebate of all but \$20, up to a maximum of \$400, is proposed. The reason for a descending maximum is to keep the cost of the program from skyrocketing at the upper end of the income scale where property tax or rent are almost always significantly higher than at the lower income

brackets. The greatest help should be given to those who need it most.

Another amendment which the conference may wish to consider is a raise in the income limit to \$5,500 for a single member household, and \$6,000 for a household of two or more.

The Esco Economic Institute, based at the University of Maine at Portland-Gorham, has recommended that the asset limit be dropped. Maine is one of the only two states with an asset limitation. It is felt that if financial assets are significant, the household income will be raised to the point where the household would become ineligible under the income limitation. An example of unfair asset test in Maine is the small wood lot owned by some rural elderly. This property was probably purchased many years ago at a fraction of its present valuation.

The principle here is sound, but it is rather doubtful that the Maine Legislature would accept an amendment which goes beyond exclusion of the homestead.

One proposal by ESCO which should be seriously considered is a method to determine what portion of a person's rent should be considered payment for the actual living quarters, excluding utilities, heat or furnishings. The method now being used is haphazard at best and varies depending on who is filling out the application. ESCO proposes the following clarification:

- A. When the tenement does not include utilities or furnishings, the tenant should be allowed 25% as the share of rent to be applied to property tax.
- B. When winter heating and/or other major utilities are included, the tenant should be allowed 20% as the share of rent to be applied to property tax.
- C. When utilities and furnishings are both included, as in the case of a furnished, heated apartment, then the tenant should be allowed 15% as the share of rent to be applied to property taxes.

Adoption of an amendment such as this would probably clear up much confusion, and the portion of rent to be considered "rent constituting property taxes accrued" would be equitably determined.

It has also been suggested that the requirement that 35% of household income be attributable to the elderly be eliminated. While it was originally feared by some that certain people would take in an elderly person solely for the tax break, perhaps it could also be argued that this would encourage more families to make homes for their senior members, thus reducing isolation and the need for institutionalization. It should be pointed out here that the entire family would still have to meet the income test, thus only low income families would qualify.

These are only suggestions for your deliberation and perhaps recommendation to the special session of the 106th Legislature. We have made great strides in the area of tax and rent refunds in the past three years. We should continue to strive to make the program as generous and equitable as possible and available to all who deserve its benefits.

(Comparative charts of property tax
and rent refund program follow)

TABLE I

PROPOSED REVISION OF 1973
ELDERLY HOUSEHOLDERS TAX AND RENT REFUND ACT

| INCOME | REFUND IS THE AMOUNT BY WHICH TAXES (OR % OF RENT) EXCEED: | MAXIMUM REFUND FOR INCOME LEVEL |
|----------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| \$ 0 - \$2,000 | (Total Refund) | \$450 |
| 2,001 - 3,000 | 5% of the excess over \$2,000 | 450 |
| 3,001 - 4,000 | \$50 plus 10% of the excess over \$3,000 | 400 |
| 4,001 - 5,000 | \$150 plus 15% of the excess over \$4,000 | 400 |
| 5,001 - 6,000 | \$300 plus 20% of the excess over \$5,000 | 350 |

SUBMITTED BY: Representative Kathleen Watson Goodwin

TABLE II

**REASONABLE AMOUNT TO BE PAID FROM
CLAIMANT'S INCOME**

Any taxes (or % of rent) which exceed proposed reasonable amount shown would be refunded up to the maximum for that income level

| INCOME | PRESENT | PROPOSED | PROPOSED MAXIMUM |
|---------|---------|----------|---------------------|
| \$1,500 | \$ 40 | \$ 0 | \$450 |
| 2,000 | 60 | 0 | 450 |
| 2,500 | 100 | 25 | 450 |
| 3,000 | 140 | 50 | 450 |
| 3,500 | 200 | 100 | 400 |
| 4,000 | 260 | 150 | 400 |
| 4,500 | 340 | 225 | 400 |
| 5,000 | 420 | 300 | 400 |
| 5,500 | — | 400 | 350 |
| 6,000 | — | 500 | 350 |

SUBMITTED BY: Representative Kathleen W. Goodwin

TABLE III

**COMPARISONS OF PROPOSED 1974 AMENDMENTS WITH 1972
INCOME SUPPLEMENT FORMULA AND
1973 CIRCUIT BREAKER FORMULA**

| INCOME | TAXES | 1972 REBATE | 1973 REBATE | PROPOSED 1974 REBATE |
|---------|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| \$1,500 | 100 | 100 | 60 | 100 |
| | 200 | 175 | 160 | 200 |
| \$2,000 | 150 | 140 | 90 | 150 |
| | 250 | 140 | 190 | 250 |
| \$3,000 | 200 | 70 | 60 | 150 |
| | 300 | 70 | 160 | 250 |
| \$4,000 | 300 | 0 | 40 | 150 |
| | 400 | 0 | 140 | 250 |
| \$5,000 | 400 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| | 500 | 0 | 80 | 200 |
| \$6,000 | 500 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 600 | 0 | 0 | 100 |

SUBMITTED BY: Representative Kathleen Watson Goodwin

TABLE IV

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE RECOMPUTATIONS BASED
ON 1972, 1973, AND PROPOSED 1974 FORMULA

| YEAR | INCOME | TAXES | REFUND |
|--|-------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1972 | A - \$2,000 | \$140 | \$140 |
| 1972 | B - \$2,000 | \$340 | \$140 |
| 1973 | A - \$2,000 | \$140 | \$ 80 |
| 1973 | B - \$2,000 | \$340 | \$280 |
| RECOMP. Using 1972 or 1973 — whichever is higher | | | |
| | A - \$2,000 | \$140 | $\$80 + \$60 = \$140$ |
| | B - \$2,000 | \$340 | \$280 |

ASSUMPTION: A can't afford any tax burden

B can afford \$60

RECOMP. Using additional benefit from 1974 formula

| | | |
|-------------|-------|------------------------|
| A - \$2,000 | \$140 | $\$80 + \$60 = \$140$ |
| B - \$2,000 | \$340 | $\$280 + \$60 = \$340$ |

ASSUMPTION: Neither A nor B at \$2,000 income can afford
tax burden

See following page for examples at \$3,000

SUBMITTED BY: Representative Kathleen W. Goodwin

TABLE V

RECOMPUTATIONS — Page 2

| YEAR | INCOME | TAXES | REFUND |
|--|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1972 | A - \$3,000 | \$100 | \$70 |
| 1972 | B - \$3,000 | \$300 | \$70 |
| 1973 | A - \$3,000 | \$100 | 0 |
| 1973 | B - \$3,000 | \$300 | \$160 |
| RECOMP. Using 1972 or 1973 — whichever is larger | | | |
| | A - \$3,000 | \$100 | $0 + \$70 = \70 |
| | B - \$3,000 | \$300 | \$160 |

ASSUMPTION: A can afford only \$30 tax burden

B can afford \$140

RECOMP. Using additional benefit from 1974 formula

| | | |
|-------------|-------|------------------------|
| A - \$3,000 | \$100 | $0 + \$50 = \50 |
| B - \$3,000 | \$300 | $\$160 + \$90 = \$250$ |

ASSUMPTION: A and B at \$3,000 income can each afford \$50

Some possible rationale for not using 1972 income supplement formula:
F 1973 returns are recomputed:

1. Perpetuates the old inequity that people with same income can afford different tax burden.
2. The same problem will occur in a few cases again next year unless 1974 circuit breaker is exorbitant.
3. A temporary return for some people to the old 1972 formula will be extremely confusing.
4. Nearly everyone will benefit if recomputation is done using 1974 amended formula.

SUBMITTED BY: Representative Kathleen Watson Goodwin

Finally, if elderly are to remain in their own homes help must be provided, appropriate services to help maintain the physical condition of their homes. Such tasks, which many elderly cannot accomplish for themselves, are: construction of porches and steps, shingling roofs, putting on storm windows and replacing broken or obsolete parts.

Therefore,

Be it resolved that the 1973 Blaine House Conference Aging strongly endorse the establishment of a statewide handy-man service and urge the legislature to appropriate necessary funds.

In terms of the development of new, subsidized housing the federal government, for all practical purposes, has frozen any and all funds which would assist in this area under the rationale that state and local governments should be doing more to improve the lot of their own people. Up to this point, the State of Maine and its municipalities have put very little into housing. They have, however, hired three employees through the Office of Maine's Elderly and today some twenty towns have set up housing authorities and do provide good living standards for their elderly citizens with the assistance of federal subsidies. Similarly, the state has established a housing authority that can operate in any town that wants it. The State Housing Authority has, however, been severely restricted because of a cut off of federal subsidies. The question is simply, are Maine people willing to get together and do it themselves?

Thus far the Office of Maine's Elderly has helped develop 60 new apartments for the elderly in four small Maine communities. There is still a federal program that provides mortgage loans at a reduced rate of interest. The people in these four towns knew their older citizens were in need of better living quarters, they had the will to help, to donate their time and money. The Office of Maine's Elderly provided technical assistance to help cut through the red tape to secure the other professionals needed to complete such projects. There are a lot of these rural rental projects in Maine: Caribou, Calais, Limestone, Ellsworth, Frenchville, Eagle Lake, St. Francis, and Jackman have all been started in the past year. The rentals are in the area of about \$120 for one bedroom apartments to about \$140 for two bedroom apartments including all utilities and grounds maintenance. These are not deep subsidy apartments, but in the case of the very poor, towns can pay a tenant's rent. Under the new general assistance legislation, a town will, under the specified conditions, be reimbursed by the state for 90% of its general assistance payments, such as paying a poor, older person's rent.

Some of the tools are here to work with now. Older people can be decently housed if only we will all move in that direction, express our wishes to the selectmen, city councilors and the legislators, as there is some more that should be done.

In the regular session of the 106th Legislature, a majority of the state government committee reported out L. D. 2028 as ought to pass. The House of Representatives passed the bill, it failed to pass in the Senate for lack of funding. One section of this bill was to provide 200 apartments for Maine's elderly. It would be a 3 million dollar revolving fund to start on the road to providing reasonable cost housing for Maine's elderly without begging to Uncle Sam. This bill can be reintroduced in the 106th Special Session. For better housing of the elderly, it should be. If the Blaine House Conference on aging would see fit to endorse a \$3,000,000 revolving fund to better house Maine's elderly, it would be a giant step forward to help many older people live out their lives in the kind of independent dignity that they have earned after a lifetime of career work and taxpaying.

Therefore,

Be it resolved that the Blaine House Conference on Aging urge the legislature to reconsider and pass legislation such as L. D. 2028 to provide new housing for Maine's elderly.

A second major impetus for developing housing would be the establishment of a "revolving seed money fund." This fund would be in the area of \$100,000 to be used to pay start up costs (surveys, engineering and architects' plans, etc.). The money would be repaid to the fund when permanent financing for the project is complete. This fund would be under the control of state government and administered by a committee of senior citizens.

Therefore,

Be it resolved that the Blaine House Conference on Aging support the establishment of a revolving seed money fund to be used for basic initial costs for new elderly housing in Maine and urge the legislature to appropriate \$100,000 to this end.

TRANSPORTATION

Workshop Personnel

- Chairman:** Floyd Scammon, President,
State Council of Older People
- Vice Chairman:** Lawrence Bagley, Past Chairman,
Central Maine Senior Citizens
- Resource People:** Willis Spaulding, Planning Director,
Eastern Maine Task Force on Aging
Lynn Fulton, Assistant Manager,
Office of Resource Development
Don Sharland, Area Director,
Cumberland-York Senior Citizens Council

Planning Paper Prepared for 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging

WORKSHOP ON TRANSPORTATION

PROBLEM:

Transportation is a continually heard problem of the elderly which has been given high priority by community agencies, health agencies, housing agencies, various state agencies, and by the elderly themselves. Transportation leads to accessibility to medical care, recreation and leisure, better meals through easier shopping, and improves the adjustment quotient of the elderly, of all problems facing elderly people in Maine, transportation is the one of paramount importance.

For example, the statewide senior citizens survey carried out for the report, **STEPS FOR MAINE'S ELDERLY** (August 1970), thoroughly documents the transportation problem of Maine's elderly. In this survey, 34.8% of the respondents listed transportation as a major problem and 45.7% of the respondents listed transportation as a major expense item.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

I. Car Pools —

Solutions to the problem of transportation are not easily found, and most are only makeshift. The use of car pools by the elderly themselves has been offered as a solution, but many elderly have encountered insurance coverage problems and threats of insurance cancellation. At best, the concept of car pools offers only limited solutions if the provision of insurance could be overcome through some method of "pool risks" of older drivers by insurance companies. The very low proportion of older people who drive and have cars is serious enough to undercut any large scale development of the "car pool" concept.

2. Public Transportation —

From a purely public transportation mode, the elderly are at a distinct disadvantage. Public transportation offers little in the way of salvation as many of Maine's elderly are located in rural areas where there are no public conveyances. Also, in the statewide senior citizens survey of 1970, respondents did not seem to perceive their transportation problems in terms of a lack of public transportation. Public transportation found in urban areas is not suited to the needs of the typical older person, although it does provide a means of some mobility.

3. Statewide Expansion of Existing Pilot Transportation Programs for the Elderly —

At the present time there are two unique and highly effective transportation programs in two regions of the state, project independence in western Maine and operation Sea-Me. in the mid-coast area of central Maine. Both programs utilize a leased minibus, dispatched door-to-door, scheduled demand-response system. In addition the minibus system is supplemented by a volunteer transportation program in which the volunteer driver is reimbursed at 10c per mile. Such a presently operational system should be expanded to all parts of the state. Once the basic minibus system is operational, it can be easily supplemented by other transportation modes such as transportation stamp programs, reduced fare on public conveyances, volunteer reimbursement for transportation, etc.

In order that all of Maine's Senior Citizens regardless of residence have basic minimum transportation services available so that they have access to necessary community and social services, a statewide minibus system responsive to the special transportation needs of senior citizens be instituted as quickly as possible.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS IN NURSING HOMES

Workshop Personnel

Chairman: Clair Wood, Chairman,
Central Maine Task Force on Aging

Vice Chairman: Henry Stone, Maine Committee on Aging

Resource People: William Carney,
Hospital Services, State of Maine
Katherine Hulsey,
Author "Bill of Human Rights for Patients
in Maine's Nursing and Boarding Homes."
Rev. Arthur Durbin,
Central Maine Task Force on Aging
Barbara Foss, Registered Nurse

Planning Paper Prepared for 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging

WORKSHOP ON PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS IN NURSING HOMES

PROBLEM:

The licensing standards for nursing and boarding home facilities in the State of Maine have not been upgraded since 1956 and tend to deal primarily with physical requirements such as fire safety and sanitation rather than the degree and quality of care given. Time and again incidents are relayed which describe such appalling happenings as a nursing home patient being denied visitors or the right to the possession of money and personal belongings. The problem arises not merely from the tragedy of this personal degradation but in the fact that standards and legal procedures to override these problems simply do not exist.

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES:

The 1971 White House Conference on Aging recommended that it is time "to shift the focus of nursing home inspection from physical plant standards to the quality of direct patient care," but to do this we must first establish standards by which to measure patients' rights and determine the type of intervention procedures and protective services that would clearly protect the rights of the indigent aged in nursing and boarding homes.

Certainly all nursing homes are not guilty of abusing patients' rights but where abuses are reported, a protective system must be developed by the state legislature which has the power to set legitimate standards (i.e., Bill of Human Rights for Patients in Maine's Nursing and Boarding Homes, which follows) and legally enforce them.

Therefore it is proposed that the resolution passed by the 1972 Blaine House Conference on Aging be reconstituted and sent back to the Special Session of the 106th Legislature for their consideration:

"Whereas, elderly residents of nursing and boarding homes are often deprived of their dignity and human rights of privacy, possession of money and personal belongings, communication, visitors, compatible room-mates and legal counsel.

Be it resolved that the Special Session of the 106th Legislature enact a patients' bill of human rights that would be defensible in a court of law. The law should explicitly provide for legal counsel and protection for the indigent aged from exploitation in nursing and boarding home facilities."

PATIENTS IN MAINE'S NURSING AND BOARDING HOMES SHOULD BE ASSURED OF:

1. THE RIGHT and ACCESS TO legal assistance.
2. PROTECTION of the patient's personal money and belongings.
3. THE RIGHT to visitors in privacy without the constant presence of the proprietor, nurses or aides.
4. THE RIGHT to use the U. S. mail without the censorship of patient's mail by the proprietor — both incoming and outgoing mail.
5. THE RIGHT to visitors unless otherwise ordered by the doctor because of illness.
6. THE RIGHT to privacy in multi-occupied rooms — curtains around bed.
7. THE RIGHT to adequate space — accessible to patient for personal belongings, such as radio, T.V., writing paper, photos, knitting, etc.

8. THE RIGHT to an electrical outlet for the patient's T.V. or radio.
9. THE RIGHT to a comfortable chair when out of bed.
10. THE RIGHT to make telephone calls (at their own expense) or to receive telephone calls without someone listening in on an extension.
 - (A) A pay phone low enough for wheelchair patients.
 - (B) Jacks installed in all rooms (cost of installation about \$12) so bed patients can make and receive phone calls occasionally.
11. THE RIGHT to a mentally compatible roommate.
12. THE RIGHT to adequate notice when told to vacate a nursing and boarding home.
13. THE RIGHT "to be told" when a patient is to be transferred to another facility.
14. THE RIGHT to use toilet facilities and to have help when necessary.
15. THE RIGHT to stenchless air.
16. THE RIGHT to proper light for reading.
17. THE RIGHT to curtains in windows to block out bright light.
18. THE RIGHT to receive ALL SERVICES paid for relating to their care, such as laundry, proper food, adequate amount of food and care of personal belongings.

— As developed by Mrs. Katherine P. Hulsey

HOME CARE SERVICES

Workshop Personnel

- Chairman:** Blanche Applebee,
Maine Committee on Aging
- Vice Chairman:** Carl Kingsbury,
Central Maine Task Force on Aging
- Resource People:** Quentin Paradis, Planning Director,
Aroostook Regional Task Force of
Older Citizens
- Weston Gamage, Coordinator,
Handyman Service, Operation Sea-Me.
- Margaret Hugle, Director of Operations,
Senior Service Corps
- Dr. Gerry Eggert, Director,
New England Gerontology Center

Planning Paper Prepared for 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging

WORKSHOP ON HOME CARE SERVICES

"We do not wish to be taken from the mainstream of life, away from the everyday activities of society and put on a shelf. We do not want a dole, but rather help in our times of crisis. We wish to live with minimum dependence on other people and government . . . government should not be the sole keeper of America's elderly, but rather a help in times of crisis. Programs must help us care for ourselves."

— Credo of the Elderly, 1970

Too often we treat our elderly in terms of their ailments and weaknesses, lending support when need is unquestionable but otherwise failing to maintain their strengths and lifestyle. We must listen to the words of the elderly as voiced in the quotation above. Rather than reacting to problems, we must prevent the problem. Rather than imposing programs on the elderly, we must support those programs and services they deem necessary. We must all work with the elderly to assure them of full lives of dignity and worth. A primary effort can be made by establishing supportive services which fill the gap between the elderly's needs and abilities and insure his health, happiness, and sense of worth.

First, we must look at the elderly citizens who maintain their own homes. With fixed incomes and the normal toll of aging, home maintenance becomes increasingly difficult. According to STEPS FOR MAINE'S ELDERLY, 63% of the elderly own their own homes and 46% record that they regularly need help with home repairs. If we allow homes of the elderly to fall into states of ill-repair, we risk serious injury, costly renovation, and unacceptable, demoralizing lifestyles. We must not allow our elderly

to sink to these deplorable conditions simply because they have no choice. We must not force elderly into housing projects and nursing homes because they are not able to meet every demand of home maintenance. We must instead provide those services which the elderly are incapable of providing for themselves. We must help the elderly remain in their own homes as long as possible by providing a handyman service to do necessary repairs such as repairing and putting up windows, and repairs to roofs, steps and porches. In the midst of our energy crisis, it is easy to see the many implications of keeping homes in good repair.

In a pilot project in Lincoln County, Operation Sea-Me. determined that 30-40% of the elderly population in that county needed the services of a handyman. With \$1,000, Operation Sea-Me. hired handymen on a town to town basis to provide services for residents within that town. In half a year the handymen served 68 families at an average cost of \$28.00 per family. Currently the program is under much pressure for expansion and, because of lack of funding, is unable to meet the crying needs of Lincoln County. The success of this program in one county alone shows quite clearly that the handyman service is a useful and successful one and must be expanded to serve state-wide.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Blaine House Conference on Aging urge the 106th Special Session to appropriate funds for the establishment of a coordinated state-wide handyman service for the elderly.

Home maintenance, however, is a much broader area than just house repair. 94% of Maine's elderly live in households and must maintain such routines as grocery shopping, cleaning, laundry, mending, and personal services. These can oftentimes be difficult tasks for an elderly citizen. Likewise scores of frail, chronically ill and disabled aged are faced daily with the need of some home help services to enable them to cope with the multiple problems of disorganization and inadequate household management, care of adults due to poor mental or physical health, isolation from community life, and lack of basic necessities for living, often-

times their efforts to cope with these problems, unaided, are ineffectual. They are frequently unfamiliar with community resources from which they may secure help, or those resources are not readily available to them.

Homemakers are a practical means by which communities may provide help, directly within the home and family setting, to assist aged individuals in maintaining themselves during times of stress and in raising their level of independent living through exposure to and demonstration of better methods of household management and self-care.

In Maine, there are approximately 150 homemakers full and part-time yet National Homemakers Health Aide Council estimates indicate Maine needs nearly 1,000 homemakers to meet the demands of our population.

The homemaker provides both a needed service and educates the individual to retain a positive level of independence and self-reliance. It also aids in assuring maximum utilization of resources available to the elderly by encouraging the elderly to use various community resources. The need and services provided by homemakers are significant but 150 individuals cannot possibly meet Maine's demand.

Therefore be it resolved that the 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging go on record in strong support of homemaker services and urge state-wide expansion of these services as soon as possible.

Unfortunately homemakers can provide services only on a part-time basis. Many of our elderly are physically infirm yet otherwise anxious to remain in their own homes. At present, there are no significant options available to such people. Either they can afford to hire full time, day and night, help or they can leave their homes for nursing or boarding homes. Even for those elderly who can afford such care, the problems of recruitment and compatibility are immense. Certainly an infirm person is unable to actively recruit services and must simply "take what comes." Often the elderly find such help poorly trained and have difficulty retaining them for extended periods of time. Where does an

elderly person in need of live-in care turn? How can he or she be certain of the quality of that care?

When an elderly person needs companionship and daily help to manage his or her affairs, live-in help is potentially an excellent aid in maintaining as much independence as possible and allows the older person to remain at home much longer than would normally be the case. At present there are no such live-in services in the state of Maine.

Therefore, be is resolved that the 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging urge the immediate establishment of a coordinated state-wide live-in services system, which would be responsible for training live-in aides and compatibly matching them with elderly citizens in need of this service.

HEALTH

Workshop Personnel

- Chairman:** Helen Dunn, Maine Committee on Aging
- Vice Chairman:** June Perkins, Executive Committee,
Cumberland-York Senior Citizens Council
- Resource People:** Richard Hooper, Director,
Androscoggin Home Health Services, Inc.
Marilyn Roberts, Director,
Sanford Community Health Association

Planning Paper Prepared for 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging

WORKSHOP ON HEALTH

The American Health Care System has long been characterized by its profound orientation toward crisis, a focus more on sickness than on health maintenance. In our technological age we seem to be caught up in intricate cures and causes, having ignored the adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." But what is the price tag on that worth? Can the elderly afford it? According to STEPS FOR MAINE'S ELDERLY, income and health problems are of equal priority importance to our elderly. Yet in attempting to alleviate income difficulties, it has been found that one can never reach a reasonable goal of income security as long as burdensome and unpredictable health costs threaten incomes of the aged. Thus a vicious circle evolves when health care cost becomes prohibitive, when no channels exist to prevent illnesses which are costly both financially and personally.

PREVENTATIVE HEALTH SCREENING:

In the absence of a national effort, it is imperative that local level operations take responsibility for health screening programs, programs which must concentrate on information dissemination and education as well as the actual physical examination of patients. According to STEPS FOR MAINE'S ELDERLY: "Lack of health information, one type of preventative care, is a very major problem. The need for health education and information is critical, since it may help older people not only improve their daily living but live longer. Maine's elderly are not aware that many health problems can be treated, while others should be accepted as part of being old. The elderly appear to focus on problems which of necessity impair their lives, but neglect major diseases which could be treated."

Problems that the elderly term "generally poor health" can be cared for in clinics for blood pressure, flu, diabetes testing, hearing, glaucoma, feet, etc. Health problems can be detected early and serious illness which often requires hospitalization or institutional care can be avoided. Likewise information on nutrition, physical therapy, and where to obtain services such as homemakers and visiting nurses can be explained.

A successful health screening program must be widely accessible to all elderly. Thus programs must be developed to meet the needs of both urban and rural elderly. This demands diversity as exhibited in such successful health screening clinics as: Trafton Well Aging Clinic, located in Sanford's senior center; a mobile screening unit utilizing fully equipped buses staffed with medical personnel; and an outpatient clinic such as that developed between Westbrook Senior Citizens and Westbrook Hospital.

Therefore it is recommended that —

Whereas, early detection of illness and disease would insure the elderly of a continuum of their normal lifestyle and avoid costly and demoralizing hospital stay, and

Whereas, Maine's elderly, both urban and rural, consider health problems to be a major concern and are in need of information, education and health screening for early detection of disease

Be it resolved that the 4th Annual Blaine House Conference on Aging strongly urge the Maine State Legislature to appropriate funds for the development of diverse health screening clinics to serve the undeniable health needs of Maine's elderly.

COST OF DRUGS:

Yet we must not look at the issue of health through rose colored glasses — looking only at prevention and ignoring those who are now suffering from an illness. If we are to maintain the health of our elderly, we must not only screen and prevent but also insure

reasonable long term care to those elderly now in need of medical assistance. This is a large order but if we follow a survey from STEPS FOR MAINE'S ELDERLY which shows cost of drugs as the #2 major expense (#1 is food), this would seem a reasonable place to begin.

The cost of drugs, at present, is a personal expense for most elderly. That is, Medicare covers drug costs only for patients in a hospital or skilled nursing home and Medicaid pays for drugs only if the individual qualifies for old age assistance or aid to the aged, blind and disabled.

However, if we look at the statistics from the National Bureau of the Census we find that approximately 62,000 Maine citizens 65 and over qualify for these funds. Yet this is totally misleading, for in October 1973 the Maine Department of Health and Welfare projected that only 12,134 of those eligible actually sign up for assistance. This while Medicaid COULD help many of Maine's elderly, we must appreciate the fact that many of our elderly, for many diverse reasons, will not accept this sort of financial assistance. In terms of long range planning, a comprehensive statewide medical plan should be investigated which would be a system separate from Medicaid. But until such a system can be implemented, we must do something about drug costs now without necessarily entangling the pervasive Medicare/Medicaid issues.

It is a tragedy that our elderly remain or become more ill or suffer needless pain because they cannot afford drugs. One answer to this dilemma has been widely researched and can be implemented on a state level by legislative action.

That is, the prescribing and dispensing of drugs by their generic or chemical names as well as by brand names. At present, major brand name drug companies spend large portions of their budgets on advertising and are able to monopolize the drug market and charge prices prohibitive to many, particularly the elderly, who are in need of a particular drug. Yet in the State of Maine, pharmacists are required to fill prescriptions as written by the prescribing doctor. Except for a very few instances, pharmacists are not allowed to sell a different and less expensive brand of medicine even if it is the same drug as the expensive brand name prescribed.

Therefore legislation must be passed which would allow pharmacists to dispense drugs by their generic name even when prescribed by a brand name.

A study by Dr. Henry Simmons, Director of the Food and Drug Administration's Bureau of Drugs, concludes:

"We are confident there is no significant difference between so-called generic and brand name antibiotic products on the American market. Any antibiotic offered for sale in the United States, regardless of whether it is brand or generic, has met the same high FDA standards."

— From FDA CONSUMER, March 1973

The generic name, then, is a quality drug if it has been FDA inspected. To insure that quality, however, any legislation should insist that generic or chemical name drugs can be dispensed by the pharmacist only if it is listed by such generic or chemical name in the most recent edition of the U. S. PHARMACOPEIA or the NATIONAL FORMULARY.

Therefore it is recommended that:

Whereas, cost of drugs is the 2nd major expense per month of Maine's elderly, and

Whereas, this cost can be substantially reduced by prescribing drugs by generic or chemical name rather than brand name

Be it resolved that the 4th Annual Blaine House Conference on Aging strongly urge the Special Session of the 106th Legislature to enact legislation which will require physicians to include generic names, if any, on all prescriptions and require pharmacists to dispense drugs by generic name if said generic name is listed in the most recent edition of the U. S. PHARMACOPEIA or the NATIONAL FORMULARY, whether or not the prescription lists the drug generically, if this is the will of the patient.

PROGRAM OF EVENTS
GENERAL SESSION

AUGUSTA CIVIC CENTER
November 29, 1973



1973

BLAINE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

A Prelude to the Special Session
of the 106th Legislature by
Maine's Elderly

Host

GOVERNOR KENNETH M. CURTIS



PROGRAM

9:00 a.m. REGISTRATION

10:00 a.m. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Dean Fisher

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Rep. Jane C. Kilroy

INVOCATION

Rabbi Barouch Garb

WELCOMING REMARKS

Jack C. Libby

10:30 a.m. INTRODUCTION OF THE SPEAKER

Rep. Kathleen W. Goodwin

ADDRESS

The Hon. Kenneth M. Curtis

11:00 a.m. PRESENTATION OF WORKSHOP RESOLUTIONS

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

Harold Collins

HOUSING

Margaret Jones

TRANSPORTATION

Floyd Scammon

11:45 a.m. LUNCHEON

1:00 p.m. KEYNOTE ADDRESS

The Hon. Edmund S. Muskie, U. S. Senate

1:30 p.m. PRESENTATION OF WORKSHOP RESOLUTIONS

PATIENT'S BILL OF RIGHTS IN NURSING HOMES

Clair Wood

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
Blanche Applebee

HEALTH
Helen Dunn

2:15 p.m. CUMBERLAND -YORK SENIOR CITIZENS
COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

2:30 p.m. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

3:00 p.m. ADOPTION OF CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

ADJOURNMENT

STATEMENTS OF SPEAKERS

INVOCATION

RABBI BAROUCH GARB

TEMPLE BETH EL, AUGUSTA

Our Father in Heaven, we are grateful to You for all Your blessings of Life, Health, and Happiness. Grant us of Your wisdom so that we shall always be worthy of being created in Your image. May we continue to improve the lot of Senior Citizens for, were it not for them, were it not for their toil, we would not now be harvesting the fruit of their labors. May we always remember the words of the Psalmist, "Do not forsake us in our old age."

Amen.

OPENING REMARKS

JACK LIBBY, BREWER

When I was asked to have a share of the speakers' platform for today, the request went something like this: "We hope, Jack, that you will set the spirit for the day by giving welcoming remarks at the opening of the conference." "Spirit for the day" . . . well, as I look back to our previous Blaine House Conferences, we were well supplied with spirit. Perhaps not the spirit exemplified by the youth of today. We have lived through the expressions of all ages and today every one of us here has a spirit well endowed with experience and responsibility, and we are here to prove it.

Speaking of our past conference gatherings, I remember the great look of anticipation showing on all our faces as the delegates came in and sat down. We were sure that this was our day and nothing that was to happen could prevent us from having a ball. The fellowship that was so evident from table to table all over the hall, the way we greeted the speakers, the wholehearted applause we had for them, the spontaneous laughter at the jokes from some of our story tellers, the way we all attacked the food as it was placed on the table before us, and the way we greeted friends we had not seen since the previous year. All this and much more has to do with the spirit of the day. Let's not let any of it change. Let's enjoy every minute of this day. As for welcoming you here, I can only say that I am one of the happiest persons present and I hope that all of you do feel as I do.

The welcome to this Blaine House Conference will come as usual from the occupant of the Blaine House, Governor Curtis. Our Governor is a great champion of the Senior Citizens and our programs, not because he is a member of a political party, not because of any pressure brought to bear from any source, but because he honestly believes that every Maine citizen should get the same recognition and respect with no thought to age. We owe much to him for our accomplishments to date. And you know I like to think that the feeling is mutual. Without going

into specifics, I am sure that he has received much help from us. We have worked together and along with the help of the majority of our legislators we are making progress in many facets of our program.

I am one who has appeared before different Legislative committees on bills pertaining to our needs. I do not see the members of these committees as Republicans or Democrats. During the last session I saw them as men and women who were honestly considering my request. Of course this was not always so. Several years ago our first attempt at reasoning together with some of these lawmakers was lacking in togetherness. As time goes on we seem to be educating each other. In reference to the men and women in the State House who make our laws, this is an area in which we all have so much responsibility. We should all know who is representing our town or district and we should also know how he or she is voting on legislation which affects us. And if or when we find that someone should be replaced, we have the votes to do the job.

Getting to the federal level, two years ago I addressed the conference and I said that although we were spending billions of dollars to travel to the moon, we could not supply enough money to get the widow who lives on the corner to the market place and back home again. Well, I can tell you that today this little old lady is somewhat better off. In some areas of our State, we have a transportation system that is taking care of such needs and plans are being made to implement this program in other areas. I am sure that you will hear about these efforts today.

We are here and what an opportunity it is for us to be congregated together. Have fun. Talk to those near you. You'll find them anxious to talk to you. If for any reason they need assistance, supply it. You will be given much advice today. Listen to all of it. It will be given for a purpose. If I had some advice for you today, it would be: First, we must stick together. We must not lose contact with what is happening with the framework of the program. We must attend whatever meetings are available to us so that we may better acquaint ourselves with problems and

solutions. We must not be greedy. If our income is above the maximum allowed to be eligible for property tax refund, let us thank God that we are this fortunate.

Our goal from the beginning has been to improve the quality of living for Maine's elderly. The most logical place to start has to be in the area where the improvement is most needed. I am sure that there are many needy Senior Citizens in our state who have not been touched with the assistance that has been made available to others. To those of us in this category I can only say, don't despair. There is hope. Our program is young and our progress in some areas is slow but with all of us working together and I mean all of us, our goals can be reached.

I must say something that I have said many times before. Some of us may feel quite secure at present, but don't plan too far ahead because our fortunes may change quickly. We may be the needy ones in the not too distant future. And if this is so, what we may do for the program now could be to our benefit eventually. I'm sure I have used up my time so why don't we stay healthy in order to be present here again next year. But today, let's make this the biggest and best Blaine House Conference ever.

ADDRESS

GOVERNOR KENNETH M. CURTIS

It is a great pleasure to once again address the Blaine House Conference on Aging. This is the fourth year Maine's elderly citizens have gathered in Augusta to discuss the problems of aging and to make recommendations for legislative action.

In the past four years many of your recommendations have been enacted into law. In September of 1970 you recommended enactment of "meaningful property tax relief for the elderly without the tax lien clause." The 105th Legislature took your advice and passed the first substantial property tax relief program in the state's history. In 1972 the Blaine House Conference passed resolutions supporting expanded transportation services, modifications in the Property Tax Relief Law, emergency state funding to compensate for federal cutbacks, and, perhaps most important, the creation of a high-level office to serve Maine's elderly. All of the above recommendations were enacted into law by the 106th Legislature last spring. In addition, when the Legislature passed L. D. 1412 last spring, they recognized the needs of the elderly and earmarked transportation, homemakers, meals, and other programs for the elderly as priority services to receive state funds.

As I review the topics which you will discuss here today, I am confident you will continue to make reasonable recommendations for improving the quality of life for our elderly citizens. I am equally confident the Legislature will listen very closely to your recommendations. I again pledge my support to your efforts and have urged the Special Session to strongly consider the needs of Maine's elderly. Specifically, we must act quickly to insure a smooth transition of Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled to federal administration. We must make some revisions in the formula for computing tax and rent refunds. And, finally, we must insure that the elderly do not suffer as a result of the energy crisis.

As many of you are aware, on January 1, 1974, the Federal Government will take over administration of Aid to the Aged,

Blind and Disabled. In order to protect the recipients of AABD in this transition, the Federal Government has mandated that state funds be appropriated to supplement the new federal program to insure that current recipients of AABD do not suffer a loss in benefits. In accordance with this federal law, I will seek from the Legislature state dollars to fund this mandatory supplement. I will also give very careful consideration to the creation of an optional state supplement to insure that those who apply for assistance after January 1, 1974, receive equal benefits. My decision in this matter will depend largely on the amount of money that is available during the Special Session.

Another major issue concerns Property Tax Relief, an issue not at all unfamiliar to this body. Primarily as a result of your efforts, the 105th Legislature enacted the first substantial Property Tax and Rent Refund Program for Maine's elderly. Because it was based on an income supplement formula, inequities resulted when refunds were granted solely on the basis of income, with no consideration to the individual's tax or rent burdens. Last year the 106th Legislature attempted to rectify this situation by basing the formula on both income and the amount of property taxes paid. Yet even with these changes, it is clear we must make further improvements in the Elderly Householders Tax and Rent Refund Act. More specifically, we must alter the formula to insure that those with very low incomes and very low property taxes receive an adequate refund. I will submit to the Legislature legislation to accomplish this objective.

Another very serious problem facing those on low or fixed incomes is the increasing cost of fuel. The price per gallon of home heating oil has risen from a low last year of 18c per gallon to 32c per gallon in some areas of the state. There is every indication that the price will continue to rise. I will introduce legislation to the Special Session to assist those on low or fixed incomes to pay their fuels. This legislation may include fuel supplements to existing programs, an emergency appropriation to the Department of Health and Welfare to assist low income households in buying

fuel, and/or legislation to prohibit fuel suppliers from altering their credit practices as a result of the fuel shortage.

While I have decided to include these items in my call to the Special Session, I would also be very happy to receive and consider whatever priority recommendations you may have. If you have other items you would like to get before the Legislature, I will make every effort to have them introduced.

It has been said that Maine's elderly movement developed to a point of fruition during my term of office. I am proud of the relationship we have shared over the years. It has been a most friendly and positive one. I am proud of the Blaine House Conferences on Aging and the substantial accomplishments such as the 1970 publication, STEPS FOR MAINE'S ELDERLY. I am proud that Maine holds national prominence as a leader in programs and reforms by and for our elderly. Yet I am certain that it was the value of your cause and your tireless efforts and dedication which gained you your favorable position in the public eye.

I assure you that you will have my support for the remainder of my term but call your attention to an important aspect of last year's legislation which calls for a statewide Blaine House Conference on Aging to be held at least every two years.

Clearly, the Legislature recognized you as an important force in the state and with this legislation you are insured constant input. I am certain you will use your power and influence, as in the past, to directly improve the quality of life for all of Maine's citizens.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE

When I agreed to give your keynote speech, I did not know that I would have to be in Washington today. The Congress is trying to complete its business before the end of the year. We have been dealing, for instance, with emergency legislation to meet the energy crisis, much of which the Senate has already passed. And today the Senate is considering legislation which I know is of equal importance to you—the Social Security Amendments, which Congress has initiated, to give the elderly and disabled an immediate Social Security increase of 7%—and an additional 4% increase next June. The Amendments also include many other provisions, including a new law to protect Social Services Programs from being cut back under the Administration's proposed regulations. And I have proposed my own amendment to this bill to prevent an increase next year in the Medicare deductible and coinsurance rate, which I will be presenting to the Senate this afternoon. So I know you will understand why I can't be in Maine today.

But this long distance talk gives me a chance to be with you and I am grateful for that opportunity.

I'm proud that the annual Blaine House Conference grows in maturity and in importance each year. And I believe the reason is that Maine is basing its aging program squarely upon the leadership and talents provided by the older residents of this State.

Our task forces on aging are built upon people not paper work.

Our statewide assessment of needs of the elderly is based upon neighborly concern and practical work methods, not upon theory and remote bookkeeping.

Our pilot programs are national models because they are real, because they are working, and because the word is spreading about their worth.

But such successes in Maine merely point out the problems of the aging in Maine—and throughout America—still need much more attention and support. I would like to describe briefly how some of those problems might be met.

Many of you know that, in Livermore Falls a few months ago I conducted a hearing on "Barriers to Health Care for Older Americans." We focused in that hearing on Project Independence, because it was the prototype area-wide program and because so many of its efforts are directed at better health care. It became clear as the hearing went on that the Project Independence witnesses were speaking from a solid foundation of gradual achievement.

I was impressed, and I took back to Washington several vivid images.

One of the most compelling images was of Medicare as an umbrella with more leaks than coverage.

I don't think that any one of our witnesses wanted to throw out the umbrella because it isn't perfect.

But they certainly wanted it repaired.

For instance, they wanted prescription drugs covered, on a reasonable and workable basis. The Senate yesterday passed an amendment to do just that, which I hope will be approved by the House and sent on to the President.

Another "leak" in the Medicare "umbrella" was in the area of home health care, on which witnesses at my hearing were especially eloquent.

Everyone seems to agree that in-home services make sense. The patient is happier in familiar surroundings. Usually, fewer public dollars are spent. And crowded institutions are better able to take care of those who need intensive help.

As witnesses pointed out, harsh and restrictive guidelines on home health have been imposed by HEW. The result in western Maine and elsewhere was that home health agencies were sud-

denly faced with financial crisis. Many hung on, many have gone out of business. A few months after the Livermore Falls hearing, I devoted two days of hearings in Washington to home health care. Witnesses came from many states. As I expected, I heard much the same story I had heard in Maine. The message was brutally simple. What should be an important segment of our national health system has been badly crippled by a combination of negative attitudes and shortsighted, sometimes contradictory federal policies.

I have therefore, introduced legislation which would make home care a viable Medicare benefit. First my bill would delete the restriction that only "skilled" nursing care or physical or speech therapy may be reimbursed as home health services under Medicare, and eliminate the requirement under Part A that home health treatment must be related to the condition requiring previous hospitalization. Second, my bill would include part-time Homemaker Services under Medicare coverage. Third, it would increase the number of home health visits covered by Medicare from 100 to 200.

I hope this bill will receive early attention by Congress, to allow home services to perform their proper role in a well-balanced health care system.

Beyond the issue of the kind of care available is the challenge of insuring that the elderly can afford good health care.

The battle lines on this issue were drawn when the administration made its proposal earlier this year, to weigh down the elderly with new additional costs for hospital and medical treatment.

That proposal got nowhere largely because of outrage in Congress and among the general public.

But a few weeks ago another threat to Medicare enrollees was announced. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare said that under current law the amount a hospital patient must pay before Medicare takes over—the deductible—would increase from \$72 to \$84 next year.

I believe that this increase would be a severe burden for many elderly persons and might even deter many who need hospital care most from seeking it. The devastating increase in the cost of living within recent months has been especially severe upon the elderly. If ever there was a time for emergency action, this was it.

And so, I have introduced my amendment to the Social Security Bill before the Senate today. It would freeze the Medicare deductible and coinsurance at its present level for one year, and it would reduce future increases, so that the deductible and coinsurance would be about fifteen percent lower than under current law. Forty-one other Senators have cosponsored my amendment. They agree that the elderly should not be burdened with still higher charges under Medicare at a time when they are paying more out-of-pocket dollars for health care than they were before Medicare became law. In a few hours, I will take this case to the Senate—and I am hopeful that I can win majority support.

There are issues beyond health care which are of critical concern to the Aging.

First is the problem of inflation. The 11 percent Social Security increase—7% immediately and 4% next June—will help soften the blows of cost-of-living increases.

Second is the problem of protecting and improving federal programs for the elderly.

One of the witnesses at my hearing in Livermore Falls, Dick Michaud, described the efforts made to tap every available source of funding for the elderly of this state: model cities, regional medical, economic opportunity, and so on. He said:

"The problem at this point is that a lot of these programs are being cut back, or limited, or being dismantled, and some are even being abolished . . . I think it destroys the hope of our elderly, who do not understand all of these technicalities and all of these regulations."

Program cutbacks are a vital issue. Too often in Washington these days, decisions about public policy seem to be made on the

basis of dogma rather than people. Often it seems that the aim is to eliminate or gut as many social programs as possible rather than to find better ways to fulfill a social goal.

We should never hesitate to change, reduce or eliminate federal programs when it makes sense to do so. But many such decisions make no sense—in part because they would cripple our effort to aid the elderly.

Housing programs are a good example. The Department of Housing and Urban Development seems to have spent the first four years of the present administration in a state of constant reorganization. And a moratorium on low cost housing programs has halted the progress made in the last decade.

Housing for the elderly is especially hard hit. The popular direct loan program is being phased out and there is no hope that adequate housing projects will be started for the elderly in the near or foreseeable future.

Another example is nursing homes. Last year's Social Security Legislation provided for the unification of Medicare standards for nursing homes with the highest standards to be retained in every case. Unfortunately, the proposed regulations actually lower standards below their former level and the Committee on Aging has dramatically exposed and protested this emasculation of nursing home standards.

And good nursing home care also requires effective enforcement, which we have not yet seen.

The Aging Committee is in the process of preparing a report on nursing home problems based on some 22 hearings held in the last four years. The report is an attempt to outline a national policy with respect to nursing homes and their treatment of the infirm elderly. I hope this report will lead to meaningful nursing home reform and that we will soon see the day when nursing homes are not regarded as warehouses for the dying.

We on the Committee on Aging have many other issues to look into. We can't promise progress in every direction, but we can

promise close attention. The problems of today may seem frustrating.

But even in a period of inflation, ups and downs in our "detente" with Russia, grave questions about the quality of leadership at the highest levels of this administration, a Mid-East crisis, and many more momentous distractions. I believe that the progress we have been making on the problems of older Americans will continue. The numbers of elderly are now great. They will become greater. Understanding of the need for action is growing. It will grow still stronger. And the work under way here in Maine is already good. It may become better and give new lessons for the rest of the nation.

It is good to share this progress with you. It is a great satisfaction to say that Maine is leading the way.

**RESOLUTIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
GENERAL SESSION**



MAINE COMMITTEE ON AGING
State House
Augusta, Maine 04330



GOVERNOR
Kenneth M. Curtis

CHAIRMAN
Kathleen Watson Goodwin

SECRETARY
Jane Callan Kilroy

Blanche Applebee
Arnold Briggs
Malcolm Brown
Helen Dunn
David L. Graham
Margaret Jones
Roger Morin
Leora Prentiss
Harold Stevens
Henry Stone
Gerald Talbot
Mary Worthley

December 7, 1973

The Honorable Kenneth M. Curtis
Governor
State House
Augusta, Maine 04430

Dear Governor Curtis:

I am pleased to present the resolutions passed by the 4th annual Blaine House Conference on Aging for your consideration. On behalf of the Maine Committee on Aging, I express our endorsement of these resolutions and urge your full support. It is our hope that you will insure that all these measures receive full consideration by the Special Session of the 106th Legislature.

Thank you for your excellent speech at this year's conference. Your appearance was, as usual, the highlight of the conference.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Watson Goodwin
Chairman

RESOLUTIONS FROM THE BLAINE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

SSI

1. Moved to approve and recommend that the legislature raise the appropriations necessary to take care of the supplemental security income as proposed for mandatory payment.
2. Moved that a committee from the Maine Committee on Aging be charged with the study of options, to work with the Appropriations Committee and to make recommendations on behalf of Maine's senior citizens to the legislature.

HOUSING

3. Be it resolved that the Blaine House Conference on Aging urge the legislature to continue the circuit-breaker formula but with more liberal benefits, i.e., total rebate of taxes (or rent constituting property taxes accrued) to elderly citizens with income of \$2,000 and less, and an increase of maximum incomes to \$5,500 for single people and \$6,000 for couples. In addition, if 1973 rebates be recomputed that it be done on the 1974 formula.
4. Be it resolved that the Blaine House Conference on Aging urge the legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to cover fuel costs for Maine's elderly whose fuel costs exceed their income available for fuel which would result in the deprivation of basic life necessities.
5. Be it resolved that the 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging strongly endorse the establishment of a statewide handy-man service and urge the legislature to appropriate necessary funds. This workshop also endorses the resolution coming out of the supportive services workshop.
6. Be it resolved that the Blaine House Conference on Aging support the establishment of revolving seed money fund to

be used for basic initial costs for new elderly housing in Maine and urge the legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to this end.

7. Be it resolved that the Blaine House Conference on Aging urge the legislature to reconsider and pass legislation such as L. D. 2028 to provide new housing for Maine's elderly.

TRANSPORTATION

8. In order that all of Maine's senior citizens regardless of residence have basic minimum transportation services available so that they have access to necessary community and social services, a statewide system, responsive to the special transportation needs of senior citizens, be instituted as quickly as possible.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS IN NURSING HOMES

9. Be it resolved that the license standards which have had public hearings in February and August, 1973, be enacted with a further requirement that each provides agreement which assures the rights of residents of nursing and boarding homes be signed by the nursing or boarding home facility.
10. Whereas, currently the State of Maine has the most costly system of reimbursing nursing and boarding homes in the country, be it resolved that the reimbursement of nursing and boarding homes for state-supported cases should be determined on a cost of operating basic as submitted to the State Department of Health and Welfare. The figures submitted shall be subject to field audit by the State Department of Health and Welfare personnel.
11. Be it resolved that the special session of the 106th Legislature enact a Patients' Bill of Human Rights that would be defensible in a court of law. The law should explicitly provide for legal counsel and protection for the indigent aged from exploitation in nursing and boarding home facilities.

HOME CARE SERVICES

12. Be it resolved that the Blaine House Conference on Aging strongly urge the 106th Special Session to appropriate adequate funds for the establishment of a coordinated statewide home care services system for the elderly.
 - A. Such home services should have three major components:
 1. **HOMEMAKER SERVICES** should be expanded to enable senior citizens to continue to remain in their own home.
 2. **LIVE IN SERVICES**, a part of homemaker services, should be instituted on a statewide basis as soon as possible to prevent the unnecessary institutional placement of senior citizens.
 3. **HANDYMAN SERVICES** should be initiated and expanded on a statewide basis as soon as possible.
 - B. The home care services system should have the following characteristics:
 1. **ELIGIBILITY** should be limited to senior citizens who are in greatest need of a particular home care service. **HANDYMAN SERVICES** should go to those senior citizens who have the greatest need regardless of income. **LIVE-IN AND HOMEMAKER SERVICES** should go to those who may be threatened with institutional placement.
 2. Preference in hiring administrators and service deliverers should go to senior citizens.
 3. These services should be coordinated on a regional basis through the area agencies on aging using local existing organizations familiar with the needs of senior citizens for administration and delivery rather than creating duplicate delivery organizations.
 - C. A statewide home care system, coordinated through area agencies on aging will go a long way to meeting the needs of the elderly in Maine.

HEALTH

13. Be it resolved that the 4th Annual Blaine House Conference on Aging strongly urge the Maine State Legislature to appropriate funds for the development of diverse health screening clinics to serve the undeniable health needs of Maine's elderly.

Be it further resolved that the office of Maine's elderly regard this as a high priority for implementation, and to this end undertake appropriate studies to establish parameters of need, estimate of costs and course of step by step development.

14. Be it resolved that the 4th Annual Blaine House Conference on Aging strongly urge the Special Session of the 106th Legislature to enact legislation which will require physicians to include generic names, if any, on all prescriptions so that the patient can have the prescription filled with the generic drug if he or she so wishes providing that said generic name is listed in the most recent edition of the U. S. PHARMACOPEIA or THE NATIONAL FORMULARY.

Be it further resolved that a bill be proposed to the legislature which would require the mandatory posting of the price of prescription drugs and finally:

Be it resolved that the Office of Maine's Elderly bring this recommendation to the appropriate professional groups to seek their assistance in its implementation.

RESOLUTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

FUEL ALLOCATION

15. "We, the delegates to the 1973 Blaine House Conference on Aging, respectfully urge that the Governor, Members of the Legislature and state officials see to it that the elderly in Maine are given fair and adequate treatment during the current energy crisis. We specifically urge that if a system of rationing or allocation of home heating fuel is adopted, the

older people of this state be given a high priority status because of their special health-related needs. We also urge that a high priority for fuel allocation be given to nursing homes and other institutions which house large numbers of older people."

FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS

16. "Be it resolved that the Special Session enact legislation providing for adequate fire safety standards and enforcement of those standards, in large hotels and other places where there is a substantial population of aged and infirm persons. We do this in light of last summer's tragic fire at the Hotel Sedgewick in Bath and in light of subsequent revelations in the press concerning the lack of adequate fire safety standards at the Sheraton-Eastland Hotel in Portland. We hope that the legislature will act swiftly and responsibly in this matter and not wait for a major tragedy before enacting this urgently needed legislation."

VOLUNTEER VISITING TEAMS

17. Be it resolved that volunteer teams be allowed and established by the Office of Maine's Elderly to serve as advocates to the elderly with the right to visit nursing and boarding home facilities at any time without previous notice. The team would serve as friends to the patients and bring problems of the patient as well as of the facility to the proper authorities.

PRIORITY SOCIAL SERVICES

18. It is apparent that some state organizations have not heeded the legislature in implementing L. D. 1412, Priority Social Services, and especially those sections which bear on senior citizens and the Office of Maine's Elderly.

Therefore, be it resolved that the legislature clarify the intent of L. D. 1412 and instruct that administrative control of Title XVI of the Social Security Act and the portion of L. D. 1412, Priority Social Services, which pertains to the elderly be placed within the Office of Maine's Elderly.

HOUSING

19. Whereas The Elderly Householders Tax Assistance Program as amended by the 106th Legislature caused approximately 6,000 older citizens to receive less or no assistance.

Be it resolved that the Special Session of the 106th Legislature pass an amendment to the Elderly Householders Tax Refund Act compensating people for the financial loss they incurred this year and further to present a tax assistance formula for the elderly citizens of Maine which will offer them further assistance that will meet the amount of 1972 returns and not lower the present level of benefits now allowed any person.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

20. We all recognize the problems senior citizens have in obtaining needed services such as dental care, eye care, and hearing care, not covered by Medicare and of extreme importance to us all. Therefore, be it resolved that the legislature consider this need and provide, either through a fund set up for this purpose or through an insurance program, the ability of all senior citizens to have at their disposal these needed services.

SELECTED STATEWIDE PRESS RELEASES

Bangor Daily News, Friday, November 30, 1973

Muskie Tags Nursing Homes 'Warehouses For Dying'

By Jim Byrnes
Of The NEWS Staff

AUGUSTA — One thousand delegates — representing 130,000 Maine residents over 65 — made it known Thursday that they do not intend to wind up in "warehouses for the dying."

From all over Maine they arrived Thursday at the Augusta Civic Center to attend the Fourth Blaine House Conference on Aging. By bus, by mini-bus, by car they descended on the conference, a spry, dignified, intelligent group with an elegance that awed those "young ones" waiting to attend to their needs.

They made their needs known in a series of resolutions, unanimously passed, chief of which was a bill of rights for patients in nursing homes, assuring them of legal counsel and freedom from exploitation. Rep. Kathleen W. Goodwin, D-Bath, chairman of the Committee on Aging, will introduce such a bill at the special session of the legislature.

Gov. Kenneth M. Curtis, who was kiddingly introduced by Rep. Goodwin as a blond "who dyes his hair gray to be more closely associated with the senior citizens, because he knows where the power lies," told the conference that he's confident the lawmakers will listen closely to the recommendations coming out of the aging conference. Very few lawmakers were present Thursday.

The governor said he plans to introduce legislation during the January session to assist those on low or fixed incomes to pay fuel bills.

Sen. Edmund S. Muskie was unable to be present because he was introducing an amendment to a Social Security bill in Washington calling for the freezing of Medicare costs to halt a scheduled increase in payments by patients, which could amount to 15

per cent, wiping out the 11 per cent Social Security increase now pending in Congress.

Addressing the conference in a telephone call from Washington, hooked to a public address system, Muskie said the two critical issues facing the elderly are inflation and the protection and improvement of federal programs for older Americans.

The senator called for improvements in federal programs for home health care, nursing homes and housing for the elderly.

The Blaine House Conference had the same ideas with special emphasis on a bill of rights for nursing home patients. It was Muskie in his address, who termed some of the nursing homes "warehouses for the dying."

Clair Wood of Waterville, who presented the bill of rights resolution, told the conference there were not enough nursing homes; there were waiting lists; indignities; lack of human compassion; patients were prisoners of proprietors; diets ignored; incompatible roommates assigned. He said that between 60 and 70 per cent of the nursing homes in Maine needed looking into for fracturing human decency. "The profit motive," he said, "should not be related to the elderly and the sick."

Blanche Applebee of Wilton spoke on the positive aspects of making it possible for the elderly to remain in their homes with the help of expanded homemaker services; handyman service — now a popular pilot project in Lincoln County, and a new idea of live-in-help when necessary.

The whole idea, she explained, is to keep the healthy out of nursing homes. "We are afraid. And for good reason. Thirty-nine per cent of the residents of all nursing homes today do not need to be there at all. Most die within six months after being placed in nursing homes. For those who are sick it is unavoidable; for those not sick, it is a tragedy."

The Augusta Red Cross Chapter manned an emergency sick room at the conference. Two "girls" took a nap. Just like high school.

Gov. Kenneth M. Curtis reminded the conference that on Jan. 1, the federal government would take over administration of aid to the aged, blind and disabled.

Gov. Curtis Plans Legislation To Help Elderly Pay Fuel Bills

By BETTY POTTER

KJ Staff Writer

Gov. Kenneth M. Curtis Thursday told some 1,000 representatives to the Blaine House Conference on Aging he will introduce legislation at the special session of the legislature to help persons on low or fixed incomes pay their fuel bills.

Gov. Curtis said, "This legislation may include fuel supplements to existing programs, an emergency appropriation to the Department of Health and Welfare to assist low income households in buying fuel, and/or legislation to prohibit fuel suppliers from altering their credit practices as the result of the fuel shortage."

He also called on the group to present any ideas it might have to him.

Sen. Edmund S. Muskie, D - Maine, who addressed the group by a telephone call from his Washington office hooked up to a public address system, said the two critical issues facing the elderly are inflation and the protection and improvement of federal programs for older Americans.

Sen. Muskie said, "Too often in Washington these days decisions about public policy seem to be made on the basis of dogma rather than people. Often it seems that the aim is to eliminate or gut as many social programs as possible, rather than find better ways to fulfill a social goal."

He called for improvements in federal programs for home health care, nursing home and housing for the elderly.

Sen. Muskie also told the group he had submitted an amendment to the Social Security bill to freeze payments for Medicare until 1975.

Sen. Muskie praised the home health care program at Livermore commenting: "As usual Maine is a forerunner in aging problems and health."

The Livermore program is part of the Androscoggin Home Health Service directed by the Veterans Administration Center, Togus. The VA trains nursing team leaders who in turn train home health aides and homemakers. The team goes directly into homes of those who need health services.

Jerome G. Plante, speaking for Congressman Peter N. Kyros, said problems facing older Americans can be summarized in three words, "Money, housing and health."

He said Kyros favors:

- Social security payments adequate to meet skyrocketing inflation.

- Elimination of the outside earnings limitation for Social Security recipients.

- An end to penalizing Social Security beneficiaries who receive other earned benefits, such as VA claims, by enacting "pass-through" legislation.

- Providing widows with 100 per cent benefit at 60 years of age.

- Expanding and extending for three years the so-called Hot Meals Program.

- Enacting of the Rural Housing Act of 1973 giving a high priority to senior citizens.

- Enacting a national health insurance program and rural health care legislation as soon as possible.

The Conference itself is urging the Legislature to appropriate enough money to cover fuel costs for Maine's elderly, to establish a revolving seed money fund for basic initial costs for new housing for the elderly in Maine, to provide a statewide system of transportation responsive to the needs of senior citizens and to appropriate funds for the establishment of a statewide home care services system for the elderly.

Curtis Pledges To Press Action For Me. Elderly

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — Gov. Kenneth M. Curtis pledged Thursday to continue his support of programs designed to meet the needs of Maine's elderly.

In an address before the Fourth Annual Blaine House Conference on Aging, Curtis said he's confident that lawmakers will listen closely to recommendations coming out of the elderly conference. He said he's urged the special legislative session to "strongly consider" the needs of the state's senior citizens. The Democratic governor told the conference participants steps must be taken to insure that the elderly do not suffer as a result of the energy crisis.

He said he plans to introduce legislation during the January session to assist those on low or fixed incomes to pay fuel bills.

"This legislation may include fuel supplements to existing programs, an emergency appropriation to the Department of Health and Welfare to assist low income households in buying fuel and-or legislation to prohibit fuel suppliers from altering their credit practices as a result of the fuel shortage," Curtis said.

Sen. Edmund S. Muskie, D - Maine, also addressed the convention in a telephone call from his Washington office hooked up to a public address system.

Muskie said the two critical issues facing the elderly are inflation and the protection and improvement of federal programs for older Americans.

The senator called for improvements in federal programs for home health care, nursing home and housing for the elderly.

Column One

Almost 1,000 senior citizens showed up for the Fourth Annual Blaine House Conference on Aging held at the Augusta Civic Center Nov. 29.

The day-long program was well planned and carried out with precision.

My wife and I were interested in all the proceedings but our attention was drawn to the assembled senior citizens from all over Maine. Their facial expressions seemed to convey their reactions to all that was taking place.

All-in-all, it was a happy group of older citizens, who came to hear about the programs, either in operation, or proposed, which would benefit the senior citizens of Maine. These same folk clearly indicated that they were willing to serve on committees or anything else they could do to help.

It was also a time for meeting new friends and some old friends whom we had not seen for years. As we wandered about the room, we talked with folk from Kittery to Fort Kent, as well as points east and west. Mr. Paradis from Fort Kent said, "I wouldn't miss this conference for anything." Mrs. Evelyn Stairs, a retired school teacher, now living in Island Falls had been in Augusta for three days serving on one of the committees for the aged.

Clair Wood, former principal of Waterville High School and a speaker at the conference, was busy talking with old friends from all over Maine.

Our old stomping grounds, Penobscot, Waldo and Knox counties were well represented. Mrs. Louise Hopkins and Miss Nettie Fayle of Stockton Springs seemed to be enjoying the whole affair. We also talked with old friends from the Bangor-Brewer area.

The hall was very quiet, however, when Gov. Kenneth Curtis spoke to the assembled group. We saw the senior citizens clapping loudly as the governor promised that his efforts in behalf of Maine's elderly would continue as long as he was in office.

Later in the afternoon we saw disappointment reflected in the same faces as Rep. Mrs. Kathleen Watson Goodwin, stepped to the podium to announce that the keynote speaker, Sen. Edmund S. Muskie, was tied down in Washington and could not attend the conference.

But the senator addressed the group by telephone and folks seemed to hang onto every word.

Among other things, Muskie mentioned the legislation he has sponsored, or is sponsoring, for increased Social Security benefits for elderly citizens and an amendment to protect our Social Security payments. He proposed a seven per cent increase to take effect now and another increase of four per cent in mid-summer.

Better care for aged citizens in nursing homes was also high on his list. "There is a critical need for more and better nursing homes," he said. Some such homes are doing a fine job, he continued, but in some, the conditions are deplorable.

At the closing session several resolutions prepared by Mrs. Goodwin and her committee were passed unanimously by the senior citizens. These resolutions will be presented to the 106th Legislature as soon as it reconvenes.

We were standing at the door when hundreds of Maine's older citizens boarded their cars for home. We heard one lady say, "I expect to run into some snow and sleet before I reach home in Madawaska."