

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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September 26, 1944

To H. O. Page, Commissioner of Health and Welfare  
Re: Veterans' Division

. . . You state that:

"Because of the rapid increase in activities relating to veterans the time has come, when, in my opinion, it would be advisable to set up a division of veterans' affairs, of which the State Service Officer would be the administrative head."

You inquire concerning your authority to set up such a division as a separate division within the department or as a division within the Bureau of Social Welfare.

Under the provisions of Section 1, Chapter 223 of the Public Laws of 1939 the Department of Health and Welfare is

"organized into two bureaus as follows:  
Health and Social Welfare, the heads of which shall be called 'Directors'."

The same section also provides for the appointment of a Commissioner of Health and Welfare and authorizes him to employ such bureau chiefs, deputies, assistants and employees as may be necessary to carry out the work of the department.

Section 2 of the same chapter provides:

"The commissioner shall have the power to distribute the functions and duties outlined in this chapter among the various bureaus so as to integrate the work properly and to promote the most economical and efficient administration of the department."

It is the opinion of the Attorney General's Office that you have authority to set up such divisions as may be necessary to carry on the work of the department, but that such divisions must be set up within one of the two bureaus of which the department is composed. It follows that if you set up a Division of Veterans' Affairs it should be set up as a division within the Bureau of Social Welfare.

LeRoy R. Folsom  
Assistant Attorney General