

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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122nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2006

Legislative Document

No. 1707

H.P. 1214

House of Representatives, December 20, 2005

**Resolve, Directing the Commissioner of Health and Human Services
To Develop Strategies To Keep Senior Citizens Safe from Falls**

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Received by the Clerk of the House on December 14, 2005. Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative CAMPBELL of Newfield.
Cosponsored by Senator COURTNEY of York and
Representatives: BOWLES of Sanford, CRAVEN of Lewiston, LEWIN of Eliot, Speaker
RICHARDSON of Brunswick, TARDY of Newport, Senators: MARTIN of Aroostook, NASS
of York, ROSEN of Hancock.

1 **Sec. 1. Research. Resolved:** That the Commissioner of Health and Human
2 Services shall promote and support research to:

- 3 1. Improve the identification of older adults who have a high risk of falling;
- 4 2. Improve data collection and analysis to identify fall risk and protective factors;
- 5 3. Design, implement and evaluate the most effective fall prevention interventions;
- 6 4. Improve strategies that are proven to be effective in reducing falls by tailoring
7 those strategies to specific populations of older adults;
- 8 5. Maximize the dissemination of proven, effective fall prevention interventions;
- 9 6. Improve proven interventions to prevent falls among older adults;
- 10 7. Improve the diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of elderly fall victims and
11 those at high risk for falls;
- 12 8. Assess the risk of falls occurring in various settings;
- 13 9. Identify barriers to the adoption of proven interventions with respect to the
14 prevention of falls among older adults;
- 15 10. Develop, implement and evaluate the most effective approaches to reducing falls
16 among high-risk older adults living in communities and long-term care and assisted living
17 facilities; and
- 18 11. Evaluate the effectiveness of community programs designed to prevent falls
19 among older adults; and be it further

20 **Sec. 2. Education. Resolved:** That the Commissioner of Health and Human
21 Services, either directly or through awarding grants, contracts or cooperative agreements
22 to qualified organizations, institutions or consortia of qualified organizations and
23 institutions, shall provide professional education for physicians and allied health
24 professionals and elder service providers in fall prevention, evaluation and management;
25 and be it further

26 **Sec. 3. Demonstration project. Resolved:** That the Commissioner of Health
27 and Human Services shall:

- 28 1. Oversee and support demonstration and research projects to be carried out by
29 qualified organizations, institutions or consortia of qualified organizations and institutions
30 in the following areas:
 - 31 A. A statewide demonstration project assessing the utility of targeted fall risk
32 screening and referral programs;
 - 33 B. Programs designed for community-dwelling older adults that use fall intervention
34 approaches, including physical activity, medication assessment and reduction of
35 medication when possible, vision enhancement and home-modification strategies;

1 C. Programs that are targeted to new fall victims who are at a high risk for 2nd falls
2 and that are designed to maximize independence and quality of life for older adults,
3 particularly those older adults with functional limitations; and

4 D. Private sector and public-private partnerships to develop technologies to prevent
5 falls among older adults and prevent or reduce injuries when falls occur; and

6 2. Award grants, contracts or cooperative agreements to qualified organizations,
7 institutions or consortia of qualified organizations and institutions to design, implement
8 and evaluate fall prevention programs using proven intervention strategies in residential
9 and institutional settings; and be it further

10 **Sec. 4. Study effects of falls on health care costs. Resolved:** That the
11 Commissioner of Health and Human Services shall conduct a review of the effects of
12 falls on health care costs, the potential for reducing falls and the most effective strategies
13 for reducing health care costs associated with falls. No later than November 2, 2006, the
14 commissioner shall submit a report that includes findings and recommendations,
15 including suggested legislation, to the First Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature.

16 **SUMMARY**

17 This resolve, which is modeled on federal legislation, directs the Commissioner of
18 Health and Human Services to, among other things:

19 1. Promote and support research designed to develop, implement and evaluate the
20 most effective approaches to reducing and treating falls among high-risk older adults;

21 2. Educate health care professionals and providers about fall prevention, evaluation
22 and management;

23 3. Oversee and support demonstration projects designed to prevent falls among older
24 adults and to prevent or reduce injuries associated with such falls; and

25 4. Evaluate and report to the Legislature on the effect of falls on health care costs,
26 the potential for reducing falls and the most effective strategies for reducing health care
27 costs associated with falls.