

tion of the State, and the counties, cities and communities which comprise it, to meet the needs of all citizens regardless of age. This is the traditional attitude of Maryland. It is a goal I have set for myself as Chief Executive of the State.

Changing patterns in the way we live in this country have created new problems, and among them the problem of how we are to meet the needs of the men and women who have reached the twilight stage of their lives. This conference is testimony to the fact that we have come to grips with this problem in Maryland.

I recall with a great deal of satisfaction, and with some degree of pride, that the first bill I signed into law as Governor of the State provided the machinery for the establishment of the State Commission on the Aging, under whose auspices this splendid conference is being held.

As you all know, medical care for the aging has been receiving the attention of our federal government. The Congress of the United States has given recognition to the fact that already 16 million Americans—about one person in ten—are more than 65 years of age, with the prospect that there will be 26 million in that age group by 1980. Many of these people over 65 have incomes inadequate for basic nutrition, decent housing and minimum requirements for recreation and medical care. This is a problem that can be solved only by the joint effort of all levels of government.

Sincere citizens are in disagreement on the scope and efficacy of medical-care legislation passed recently by the Congress. It has been criticized, for example, because it covers no more than 20 per cent of the 16 million persons over 65. Also, there are those who find fault with it because the medical care it provides is in the nature of charity. I think we will all agree that our older citizens should be able to collect their benefits with dignity and without the stigma of charity. This much I can assure: We will make every effort to utilize the provisions of this new federal legislation to the benefit of the people of Maryland. In this connection, I have directed the State Department of Health and Welfare to undertake an immediate study of the Act and make recommendations to me and to the General Assembly.

I should like to review with you some of the steps we have taken here in Maryland to meet the medical needs of our citizens. The job, let me say, is not finished, but I believe we have laid a sound foundation upon which we may build.

We are operating three hospitals for chronic diseases. We have a general hospital inpatient and outpatient program. We have a program