

The evidence presented clearly shows that we have allowed these homes to operate in a bewildering tangle of bureaucratic regulations and inadequate laws, where state agency overlaps city agency, where ambiguous lines of authority and the absence of clearly delineated responsibilities create confusion and carelessness, and where lack of adequate supervision potentially endangers the life of every patient in every nursing home. It is clear to the members of this board of inquiry that recent events at the Gould nursing home could be repeated tomorrow at any nursing home in this state unless multiple corrective measures are undertaken." (Pg. 1) \* \* \*

"At the opening of the public hearings, the panel stated that from our incomplete and fragmentary knowledge of the complex problems posed by the long-term care of the helpless and aging, we felt it quite possible that this tragedy in one nursing home might be but the tip of an iceberg—an alarm signal indicating that as a society we had failed to deal responsibly with the problems of our elderly citizens who require care not given in their homes or by their families. Our investigation confirms this suspicion and points up the crying need for an in-depth study of nursing homes in Maryland. This panel's report, which should not be mistaken for the exhaustive study that is demanded, is offered at this time because of this panel's profound obligation to make known to the families of those persons who died during the salmonella epidemic at the Gould Convalesarium, and the public, its general findings.

"Thus, the report of this board of inquiry will raise more questions than it answers. Our short investigation strongly suggests that nursing homes in general are not doing the job they should be for our elderly citizens, that they may be managed by poorly trained administrators, that their standards of cleanliness may not meet either the letter or the spirit of legal standards, that their personnel are often insufficiently trained and sometimes insensitive to their patients. Further, there is much to suggest that medical practices of physicians and other personnel in the nursing homes are at times not good, that the public health agencies which monitor the practices and the conditions in nursing homes are not doing their jobs, and that the legislation that controls nursing homes needs dramatic overhauling." (pg. 2)

*"The panel must state \* \* \* that it firmly believes that specific failures evident in the current tragedy are but symptomatic of the serious problems of nursing homes in general. All of the evidence suggests that the Gould home was and is a better-than-average nursing home. Thus, we feel that the recent events at the Gould home could be repeated at virtually any nursing home in the state, unless the broader, general problems are faced and corrected."* (pg. 5)

AND WHEREAS, the Board of Inquiry considered the general problem of nursing homes in Maryland and concluded:

"We now turn to the broader problems which we believe underlie the Gould Convalesarium tragedy and, indeed, almost inevitably assure its recurrence in other nursing homes in Maryland. The problem surrounding nursing homes is a problem for all of American society today. The shamefully low priority our society places on the care and comfort of its aging and infirm is obvious throughout all of the testimony and the material we have reviewed.