

# Plight of the Elderly in Today's Society - 1983

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## Issue

- 1) Housing—creating more multi-need (varied levels of independent) Jewish Housing for our aging population.
- 2) Medical insurance—securing proper medical coverage for the aging.
- 3) Counsel—providing counsel and education to the elderly and their families regarding the aging process and the emotional/social needs of the elderly.
- 4) Legal Counsel—providing adequate counsel so that seniors are aware of their rights.

## Background

The demography of the United States and developed world populations has changed radically in recent years. This change is most evident in the growing group of people known variously as elderly, seniors, or over 60's; and even more in the rapid development of a totally new group of persons who are over 80 years of age. Because of longer life span and various economic factors, women are a disproportionate number of the needy elderly. Demography and a more mobile society have also caused families to move apart from one another—often leaving an aging individual separated from other family members. Because parents and adult children tend to live under different roofs, even if in close physical proximity, both children and parents tend to develop independent life styles.

As the population grows older, different sets of needs (both physical and social) arise. It becomes necessary, in fact imperative, for us, whether as children, concerned individuals, and/or aging persons, to address these needs.

We Jews have tended to fall behind in this field of meeting the needs of our growing population of the elderly. Whereas most Christian denominations provide more than adequate senior housing, with accommodations for multi-levels of independence, and also supply ongoing support (financially, physically, and emotionally) for their aging populations, we, as socially conscientious Jews, have fallen behind. Our awareness of the needs of this population, and our willingness to address these issues constructively is one of the timeliest issues of this era.

We cannot, in all good conscience, say that we are concerned with the family, and address only those family members whose years number less than 45. As we move further into the 20th century and towards the 21st, let us take these developments into account and act to meet the needs of both our current and our future aging population.

## Resolution

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods urges its members:

- 1) To become familiar with the needs of the elderly;
- 2) To become better informed about governmental and private counseling programs, medical care plans; and housing facilities presently existing in their communities;
- 3) To share information on this subject, to educate, and make the membership-at-large more aware of it;
- 4) To promote development of better housing, better financial and medical aid, and better counseling for our growing elderly population;
- 5) To become sensitive to the large percentage of women caught in these social and economic realities.

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