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National
Council of
Health Centers

2600 Virginia Ave. N.W. Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 298-7393

replied 12/17/82.
only
pursuant
to acts of
congress

October 7, 1982

Mr. Morton Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President
White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Blackwell:

The National Council of Health Centers would like to take this opportunity to formally request the issuance of a presidential proclamation or message on behalf of the thousands of American veterans residing in the nursing homes of our Nation.

The National Council represents proprietary nursing home firms with facilities in 48 states and the District of Columbia. Council members own or operate approximately 180,000 beds in more than 1,000 facilities, and engage in providing a number of health-related services such as home health, alcohol and drug rehabilitation, and hospice care.

Because we are actually involved with the elderly in our facilities, we are struck by the fact that the annual observance of Veterans Day often fails to touch the many men and women veterans in nursing homes throughout the United States.

This Veterans Day, the National Council will be honoring veterans residing in nursing homes owned or managed by member firms. The program was initiated by the National Council's Public Affairs Task Force. The idea came about during discussions relating to Birger F. Westergard, the oldest living Marine who resides in an Oxnard, CA, nursing home that is owned by one of our member organizations.

A veteran in each facility will be honored with the presentation of a certificate of recognition. This year, the oldest living veteran would be honored. In subsequent years, the National Council will recognize the oldest living Marine, Navy or Army retiree, oldest officer, woman or enlisted veteran.

The ceremony in each facility will follow a similar format: an opening prayer by a local minister; reading of a patriotic poem; singing of patriotic songs by a local scout troop, elementary school class, or high school chorus; reading of a proclamation or speech by a local dignitary; and, the awarding of the certificate and remarks by the honoree.

Mr. Morton Blackwell

October 7, 1982

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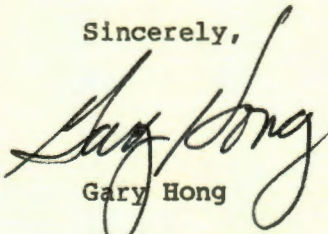
In addition, recommended related programs would include:

- Encouraging families to bring a resident's military memorabilia (e.g., uniform, medals, etc.) into the facility for display.
- Placing a large world map in the facility's lobby and highlighting the various countries served by the resident's during their military service.
- Displaying photographs of the residents taken during their military service and having a contest to see who can identify the most individuals.
- Writing a biography of the honoree for the local media, highlighting his military career.

We sincerely feel that the issuance of a proclamation or message from the President would be an appropriate method of recognizing those Americans who answered the call to arms of our country.

If you have any further questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to call me. I have enclosed a copy of the National Council's "Statement of Business Practices" for your information.

Sincerely,



Gary Hong

GH/kmd

Enclosure

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 17, 1982

Mr. Gary Hong
National Council of Health Centers
2600 Virginia Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Mr. Hong,

I would like to thank you for your suggestion regarding a Presidential Proclamation on behalf of American Veterans in nursing homes.

Traditionally, the President issues such proclamations only when Congress authorizes him to do so. You may, therefore, wish to contact those who represent you in Congress regarding your idea.

Sincerely,

Morton C. Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President
for Public Liaison.