

## General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

**Resolution No.:** 2024-A019  
**Title:** Create a Task Force on Senior Wellness and Positive Aging  
**Proposer:** Secretary of General Convention  
**Topic:** Aging, Structure

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### **Directly Related:** (Attached)

2009-D004 Authorize a Task Force on Older Adult Ministries  
2003-A007 Authorize Creation of an Executive Council Task Force for the Aging  
1991-A114 Reaffirm the Ministry of the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging  
1991-C057 Urge Continuing Education in Aging and Older Adult Ministries  
1988-C012 On the Topic of Ministries With Aging (Rejected)  
1985-A086 Express and Encourage Support for Ministry and Services to the Aging  
1982-B021 Support Efforts to Minister to the Aging  
1979-C001 Initiate Programs in Ministry to the Aging

### **Indirectly Related:** (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2012-A153 Continue Older Adult Ministries Task Force  
2000-D012 Authorize Study of Impact of Aging Population on the Church

*In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).*

# A019 - Create a Task Force on Senior Wellness and Positive Aging

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Secretary of General Convention

**Has Budget Implications:** Yes

**Cost:** \$30,000.00

**Amends C&C or Rules of Order:** No

**Requests New Interim Body:** Yes

**Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib:** No

**Directs Dfms Staff:** No

**Directs Dioceses:** No

**Directs Executive Council:** No

**HiA:** HD

**Legislative Committee Currently Assigned:** 16 - Safety, Wellness & Mental Health

**Completion Status:** Incomplete

**Latest House Action:** N/A

**Supporting Documents:** No

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## Resolution Text

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention authorize the creation of a Task Force on Senior Wellness and Positive Aging, among its goals to:

- Identify the major challenges to positive aging;
- Communicate with congregations, dioceses, and provinces to collect information about their approaches to these challenges;
- Explore networks in which the Task Force can be a meaningful partner;
- Coordinate with the Presiding Bishop's staff to ascertain facets of their ministries in which the Task Force might have a useful role to play;
- Review existing General Convention policy on aging and senior wellness to identify gaps and opportunities, and consult with the Office of Government Relations to identify areas where political advocacy could be useful. Consider developing resolutions for Executive Council and General Convention that identify advocacy priorities for positive aging and senior wellness.
- Initiate conversation with leading non-profit senior care providers and advocates, particularly those affiliated with The Episcopal Church;

And be it further

*Resolved*, That the Task Force will produce a resource of best practices for congregations, dioceses and provinces to support their ministries to persons in the second half of life as they strive to participate meaningfully and creatively in life-long learning and to engage constructively in the communities in which they live; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Task Force will report annually to The Executive Council and to the 81st General Convention; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this task force be appointed jointly by the Presiding Officers, with between 10 and 14 members, two to four of whom shall be bishops, two to four of whom shall be clergy, and not more than six lay persons, with the members having some professional, pastoral or medical background in senior care and wellness; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$30,000 for the implementation of this resolution.

## **Explanation**

This resolution was referred from the 80th General Convention. It was proposed by the Executive Council, listed as A054, and referred to Legislative Committee 13 - Committees & Commissions

In the midst of an enormous demographic shift in the number of people over 65 in the United States and the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this segment of the population, our Baptismal Covenant's call to "strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being" must be an urgent incentive to be a catalyst for dialogue, analysis, and change in the way society nurtures its older members.

There are daunting challenges that accompany the demographic shift that is taking place in the United States population, as well as that of most other developed countries, as the number of adults over 65 years of age nearly doubles by the year 2050 (increasing from 43.1 million in 2012 to 83.7 million in 2050). All segments of the senior care system will be put under great stress as people in this demographic wave seek ways to age positively and ensure ongoing wellness.

We have witnessed the devastating impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on older individuals, exposing the vulnerability of those over 65 by highlighting questions surrounding long-term care communities, hospital preparedness, supply chains for critical medical equipment, the psychological and physical effects of isolation, and coordinated governmental response, as well as a host of other issues bearing upon senior wellness. Some 80% of COVID-19 deaths have been in people over 65 years old. Approximately 7% of all cases, and 40% of all deaths have been related to long-term care facilities, nursing homes particularly.

Faith communities have a vital role to play in being a powerful advocate for a holistic approach to senior wellness and positive aging, calling for the inclusion of spiritual, cultural, mental, intellectual, and social wellness alongside physical care. The Episcopal Church has

taken an active role in older adult ministries historically. The Episcopal Society for Ministry to the Aging (ESMA) was active from 1970 to 2003. A Task Force on Older Adult Ministries was authorized in 2009, re-authorized in 2012, its work curtailed in 2015. This is an important time for The Episcopal Church to reengage in this vital area of ministry.



**Resolution Number:** 2009-D004  
**Title:** Authorize a Task Force on Older Adult Ministries  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Substituted  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 76th General Convention authorize the creation of a 12 member Task Force on Older Adult Ministries to determine programs currently being offered by congregations, dioceses and provinces, to establish a method of sharing this information, and to explore ways the Church can expand this ministry to connect with one another in intergenerational opportunities; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Task Force would formulate a comprehensive plan to raise awareness and address the emerging crisis in health, care giving and faith issues which cross generational and economic lines with emphasis on support of Congregational, Diocesan and Provincial programs for older adult ministry; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Task Force will be comprised of individuals with a background in this ministry area and will represent a cross section of our church; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Task Force will work collaboratively with the Evangelism and Congregational Life Center and report annually to the Executive Council and provide a complete written report to the 77th General Convention; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$35,000 for the implementation of this resolution.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), pp. 711-712.



**Resolution Number:** 2003-A007  
**Title:** Authorize Creation of an Executive Council Task Force for the Aging  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 74th General Convention authorize the creation of a six-person Task Force of the Executive Council, coordinated through the Office of Ministry Development, to assess ministry opportunities with and for an aging population both within and outside the church; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$10,000 for implementation of this resolution.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 476.



**Resolution Number:** 1991-A114

**Title:** Reaffirm the Ministry of the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging

**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred

**Final Text:**

***Resolved, That the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church reaffirm and support the mission and ministry of the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging (ESMA) and commend the embracing of the ministry of ESMA to all levels of the Church (provinces, dioceses, congregations, institutions and nursing facilities).***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 252.



**Resolution Number:** 1991-C057  
**Title:** Urge Continuing Education in Aging and Older Adult Ministries  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That all dioceses of this Church be urged to encourage continuing education of clergy and laity in aging and older adult ministries.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 787.





**Resolution Number:** 1988-C012  
**Title:** On the Topic of Ministries With Aging  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Rejected  
**Text of the Resolution:**

*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 69th General Convention of the Episcopal Church direct the Executive Council to create and fund an office of Ministries with Aging under the Executive for Education for Mission and Ministry; and be it further

*Resolved*, That Ministries with Aging be staffed and funded in amounts equal to Ministries with Youth; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council provide effective leadership in mission and ministry with aging.



**Resolution Number:** 1985-A086  
**Title:** Express and Encourage Support for Ministry and Services to the Aging  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 68th General Convention expresses its appreciation to the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging (ESMA) for the leadership it has given in stimulating an ever deepening concern at national, regional and local levels for the Church's ministry to and with older persons; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Episcopal Society For Ministry on Aging (ESMA) be reaffirmed and charged with continued development of services and financial support for the services, reporting such development to the 1988 General Convention; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the seminaries and schools of theology related to this Church be urged to provide continuing education in gerontology, including ethical decision making about the dying process, and other special pastoral needs of the elderly; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Secretary of Convention be instructed to protest to the President of the United States and to members of the Congress those cuts in Social Security benefits, supplemental housing funds, Medicare, Medicaid and other health and welfare supports which heretofore have been made available to all Americans, young and old, who can demonstrate that they have insufficient funds to provide a decent life for themselves; and be it further*

*Resolved, That all dioceses, parishes and missions be urged to accept responsibility for the development of opportunities for an active ministry by and with all older members, expand training of all staff serving in Episcopal institutions for the aging and to promote a spirit of church family through inter-generational ministry.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 1985* (New York: General Convention, 1986), p. 273.



**Resolution Number:** 1982-B021  
**Title:** Support Efforts to Minister to the Aging  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Substituted and Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 67th General Convention recognize the need for discussion within each diocese of the Episcopal Church for further development of ministry on aging in parishes/missions and communities of the diocese; and be it further*

*Resolved, That each diocese assist its clergy and laity to identify the needs and resources of older persons; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the proposed national satellite conference on aging of October 18, 1983, provide a unique and distinctive opportunity for understanding and the development of ministry in aging; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Church, through its spokesmen, as advocates in support of programs which make possible a more abundant life for older adults, particularly the poor and deprived and those who are victims of prejudice and discrimination [sic]; and be it further*

*Resolved, That congregations, dioceses and other agencies of the Church develop programs which will compensate for some of the worthwhile programs which are being limited or discontinued by governmental agencies; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 67th General Convention reaffirm the Episcopal Society on Aging (ESMA) as its agency in initiating programs through local congregations, dioceses, provinces and other agencies throughout the Church and encourage the dioceses to participate in the national conference on aging, entitled "The (IN)Dignity of Aging," cosponsored by Trinity Institute and the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging (ESMA).*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, New Orleans, 1982* (New York: General Convention, 1983), p. C-100.



**Resolution Number:** 1979-C001  
**Title:** Initiate Programs in Ministry to the Aging  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging initiate and implement programs with and through the congregations, agencies, and units of this Church to advance the well-being of older adults; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging cooperate with theological seminaries, colleges, universities, campus ministries and other appropriate agencies to implement programs to equip Clergy and Lay leaders with knowledge and skills to strengthen their ministry to the aging; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging cooperate with Parishes, Dioceses, and the Executive Council to seek a more positive image of aging and greater justice for the elderly by supporting social issues affecting their well-being including adequate income, adequate housing, adequate supportive health and welfare services, and to express their concern to appropriate government units, legislatures and agencies; and be it further*

*Resolved, That all members of this Church be called upon to support these programs and to work individually and collectively to make clear to all that older persons are an integral part of God's family.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 1979* (New York: General Convention, 1980), p. C-112.