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Mr. Chairman:

It is a pleasure to be here this evening with this distinguished company. You are here at the invitation of the Director of Social Security to study and prepare plans for a ten year health program.

Mr. Ewing called the conference because it can be a great help in building up our greatest natural resource, the health of the Nation.

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We are all interested in health personally and some of us are interested in health as an asset to the nation as a whole. That's the ~~why~~ major for this conference

We can do much here by exchanging ideas, by making plans & setting goals for the future.

The able and distinguished men & women who are here are experts in many

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lines relating to public health and general welfare. An exchange of ideas with them can't help but do all of us good.

My special interest in health dates back some 30 odd years. When World War I came on I helped to organize and recruit a regiment of Field Artillery for service and I was appalled at the large number of young men who were unfit for

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Service. This was a National Guard Volunteer outfit and when a man was rejected for physical disability it was tragic to him and to those of us who wanted him in the outfit.

That made me pause and think and later when I became the chief administrative officer of my county of 500000 population I became very much interested in public health both mental & physical,

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It was my duty along with two very able associate judges on the County Court to pass on the sanity of people brought before us and order them to State Hospitals. (What some of them would say about the Court)

From that County of 500000, over an eight year period, the average number of people sent to state hospitals for mental diseases, ran between 2 and 3 per thousand per year and of course

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that did not take into consideration those in private institutions.

Then the count had to care for indigent and paupers and see that very poor people had medical care. We had two county physicians whose business it was to look after these people. The County home had a population amounting on an average to about 800. Afterwards, adto-

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cated and built a County Hospital in connection with the home. Kansas City also had a large and efficient City Hospital which cared for from 500 to 700 patients and to which the County also sent people for medical care.

I found that the indigent and the very rich were well cared for in my county, but a family

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on the average income ~~from~~ from $1500 to $3600 per year just could not afford to get sick or to have ill health. Hospital care even twenty years ago was out of reach and it was a real sacrifice to pay ordinary doctor bills. This gave me more food for thought and when I came to the Senate I was already Social Security and health minded.

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When I became the Chief Executive of this nation I tried to do something about it.

In September 1945 I sent a 21 point message to Congress and in it promised a health message which came along a few months afterwards. In Nov. 1945 I asked for a Universal Training Pro-

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grow — remembering my experience in 1917 and the terrible health record of the draftees more than 1/3 of whom were rejected. Think of it — more than 4 millions of a possible 17½ millions unfit physically or mentally. It is disgraceful I think.

We lose more than 8 billions annually in lost man hours due to ill health. And I

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Can't help mentioning right here the more than 23 million physically handicapped most of whom are physically handicapped by avoidable accidents. I've been trying to help overcome that situation too since I've been President.

But there is a bright side to the picture. In Caesar's time the life expectancy was 31 for men now it's 67. Twenty five years of that has

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been added in the past ten years.

When the Spanish-American War was with us Yellow Fever and Typhoid were rampant! We've practically overcome them: in World war I Flu was our most fatal disease. In this last war we had to go to the South Pacific to get any new and fatal diseases. Bad hearts, cancer, T.B. polio

I mentioned we'd added

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75 years to life expectancy in the last 10. We'll all be Townsendites if that keeps up and all be paying taxes to pay our elder pensions. Last year Six billions of dollars was paid out for Doctor bills and I suspect equally as much for hospitals and yet the hospitals are itself supporting.

Middle incomes groups can't afford proper medical care - and they can't afford

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to raise babies at least not in Washington.

In my youth doctors charged from $15 to $25 to officiate at a birth - now they want $500 just for pre natal care. Can you imagine a $2400 a year clerk raising four children. Yet it was done and well done in times past.

I've repeatedly asked Congress for a health

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program to help meet this situation.

You can make a practical approach to our health problems if you'll get behind my health program and push. We are on verge of a tremendous age.

When we get Atoms harnessed for peace startling health discoveries are in the offing. Let's prepare ourselves for that age by learning to live together peacefully. For three

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long years I've been trying for just that and some day ~~we~~ we shall have it.

Now lets make it possible to pay for the care we know how to provide - remember my recommendations to Congress.

Remember our awful losses from illness - the overwhelming cost to middle income groups

Remember the nation's health is the nations strength

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Peace, health and hard work bring prosperity and make a great nation and I hope eventually a great world in which to live.