

## Specifics Uncertain Till Action Taken

# Reagan Proposals Would Affect Hoke

### Comprehensive Program In Hoke Planned

## Health Agency Plans Hospice Service

The nonprofit Home Health Agency of St. Joseph-in-the-Pines Hospital of Southern Pines is planning to provide a comprehensive program of hospice care in Hoke County for terminally ill patients.

This was announced Monday morning by George Kecatos, administrator of the agency. The Hoke County branch, whose offices are at 529 Harris Ave., Raeford was established in December 1977.

He said the Home Health Agency is providing the hospice service informally.

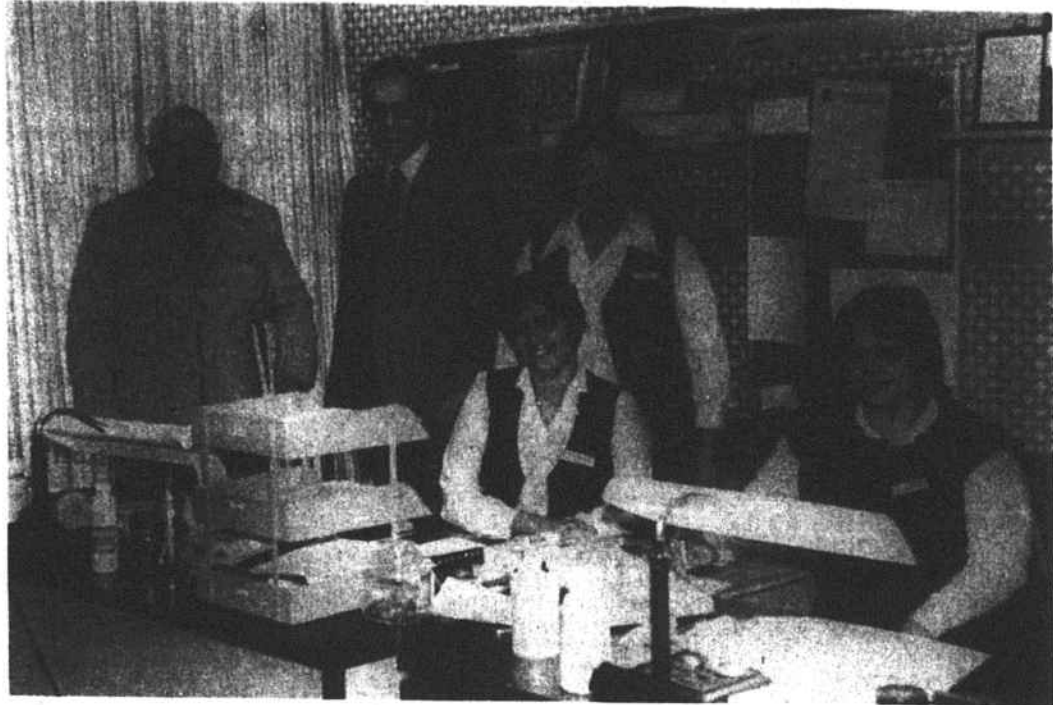
The St. Joseph's Hospital agency also has a branch in Lee County, as well as in Moore. Kecatos said Monday also the agency's services will expand into Anson County within the next few months, and the agency is studying the possibility of adding a nurse coordinator to maintain better continuity of care from hospital to home in all four counties the agency will be serving after the Anson branch is added.

Kecatos also said the plans for the comprehensive hospice program also include Lee County.

Home Health is now providing these services in Moore County, working closely with Sandhills Hospice, Inc., Kecatos added.

The agency in each county provides nursing, physical and speech therapy, and nursing assistance to homebound patients, regardless of their ability to pay. Kecatos said. Last year, \$41,000 in charitable assistance was provided to patients of the three counties, some by the United Fund in each county and the rest by other private donations made by individuals and organizations. The Hoke County branch will get \$1,000 from the Hoke County United Fund during 1982, if the fund-raising drive, which will start March 1, reaches its goal of \$19,850.

Patients are charged according to their ability to pay. The charge may be met by Medicare or Medicaid for patients eligible for these coverages, and some private insurance plans may cover part or all of the costs of home health



L-R. Julian Wright, George Kecatos, Helen Fields, Judy Ferguson, and Ronda Pickler. [Staff photo.]

visits. The private donations, through United Way and other sources, help the agency meet deficits.

One of President Reagan's proposals to cut federal government spending if Congress approves is the elimination of \$41.34 million in Medicaid. Kecatos, replying to a question, said, however, that "patients still will be served" by Home Health, regardless of whether or not the Medicaid proposal is approved.

Last year, Home Health staff people made about 10,000 visits to patients in the three counties, Kecatos said, adding the visits were made under direction of the attending physicians.

The Home Health Agency's services among other benefits cut the time patients must spend in hospitals or nursing homes. Federal,

state, and local governments encourage the use of home health services such as those provided by the St. Joseph's and similar organizations. Patients in all but two of the state's 100 counties are served in their homes by home health care organizations.

The Moore County branch of St. Joseph's Hospital Home Health was established in 1969, the first of the present branches. Two years later, the Lee County branch was opened. The success of these two resulted in the opening of the Hoke County branch.

Kecatos said Home Health's work has been well received by physicians in the three counties, with physicians making favorable comments about the services provided by the people of the staff to the patients.

Judy Ferguson, a Registered

Nurse, was the entire staff of the Hoke agency when it opened. Then Ronda Pickler, another RN, joined her the following April. Now the staff also has Nursing Assistant Helen Fields, Physical Therapist Charles "Chuck" Hardesty, and Speech Therapist Virginia Christiansen.

An Advisory Council of 15 members evaluates and helps promote the agency's services in the three counties.

The council is made up of professional health care providers, consumers, and business people. The Hoke County representatives on the council are Julian Wright, and Wyatt Upchurch, businessmen.

Wright is the present second vice president of the council. The president is Mrs. Ida Baker Scott of Southern Pines.

President Reagan's federal budget proposals would affect Hoke County federally assisted programs but the effects can't be determined till the specific cuts are approved by Congress.

County Manager James Martin said when questioned last week that for example he doesn't see what the cap on Medicaid costs would mean to the county.

"I hope," he said, "it doesn't mean a larger share of the costs will be born by the states and counties." The talking may be about restructuring eligibility requirements, he added.

The president has proposed a cut in Medicaid, a program which combines federal, state and county money to provide payments for health services of the poverty-level people. For North Carolina, according to last week's reports, this would amount to \$41.34 million cut from this program.

Transportation in North Carolina would lose \$32.8 million in federal assistance. Martin said cuts in airport grants would hurt the county indirectly, related to the county airport. An industrial sites study sought for Hoke County would include the airport, and the county has applied for a \$24,000 grant to help finance the study. Hoke has no local bus or passenger-train service, so it would not be directly affected.

However, the status of the grant would be in question if approved, since Reagan has proposed termination of the federal Economic Development Administration, the funding agency.

Another proposal would have the federal Comprehensive Employment Training Act administered by the states phased out by next September. This would affect a number of public-service jobs, some of them parttime, in Hoke County.

The county government employs three fulltime CETA-paid people; the County Parks and Recreation Department eight to 10 parttime to help with youth activities; the library one fulltime CETA worker; and the county school system others.

A 20 per cent cut is proposed in elementary and secondary education block grants. This would amount to \$30.8 million statewide and reportedly would affect programs for disadvantaged and migrant children, education for the handicapped, and adult basic education. A total of 45 elementary and secondary programs now financed by grants would be consolidated into two block grants. In effect, Reagan would have the states spend the money on education as they wished.

Under the president's proposals the number of people who receive food stamps would be reduced, in line with Reagan's announced intention to restrict public assistance to the "truly needed."

But will food stamp cuts transfer recipients from federal food stamps to county-funded public welfare? asks Bernard F. Hillenbrand, editor of "County News," the publication of the National Association of Counties, in an article in the February 23 edition.

"Well Medicaid caps," he also asks, "overwhelm our county-funded health facilities with new clients?"

What the proposed cuts would mean to other Hoke public-assistance programs couldn't be determined this week, as Ken Witherspoon, director of the County Department of Social Services, the course for this information, was out of his office after late Monday morning and will not return till Thursday afternoon.

## Free Tax Form Filing Help Here

Free tax assistance is available to Hoke County residents who are confused about filling out a federal tax return or cannot afford to pay for assistance.

It's called Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and is offered by Four-County Community Services, Inc. Volunteers are trained in tax law and return preparation by the Internal Revenue Service and will assist taxpayers with Forms 1040A and 1040. Many taxpayers are unaware of the exemptions, deduc-

tions, and credits to which they may be entitled.

Four-County Community Services, Inc. will offer VITA help Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Cameron Heights Neighborhood Service Center, County Road 1149, Raeford, until April 30.

Taxpayers interested in free tax assistance should bring their tax forms packets, W-2 forms, and other pertinent tax documents to the VITA Center.

## Around Town

BY SAMC. MORRIS

It was perfect weather for golfers and tennis players the past weekend. As this is being written Monday morning, the forecast is for rain and this will be perfect weather for the farmers. We could use a week of slow, steady rain.

Don't turn off the heater yet because it will be cold around Easter which this year is Sunday, April 19.

From the comments of most people in the County, the Board of Education made a fine choice in the selection of Robert Wright as a member. As a father of three children in school, he should certainly have an interest in the day to day affairs in our school system.

Of course it won't be long before someone will disagree with his voting, but this comes when you become a public servant.

Congratulations Bobby on your appointment.

I met John Howard last Tuesday night at the joint meeting of the Men of the Churches. John, as you can read elsewhere in this paper, has just purchased DeVane's Men's Store on Main Street and will take over March 1.

He accepted my invitation to come by the office and engage in conversation for a few minutes last week. John is the son of the late Charlie Howard and a nephew of the late Archie Howard of this county. He has purchased the old homeplace between Antioch and Dundarrach and will make his home there. It is a pleasure to welcome him to this city.

While on the subject of the Men of the Churches, we attended and made our way to a seat at the table next to the kitchen. In a few minutes a certain preacher in this city and his son-in-law came and sat down with me. The reason I chose the seat was to get into the chow line first.

After a few minutes of conversation, the preacher excused himself to go and speak to someone on the other side of the hall.

After the blessing, the president of the Methodist men said the line would form on the opposite side from where I was sitting and go around the halls and back through the kitchen to get chow. Before the people at our table started lining up, to and behold, the preacher was back at his seat with his steak plate.

Now what is the moral to this story? Stay with your preacher and be first in line!

A letter was received by yours truly from his son, John, last week who lives in Greenville, S.C.. All that was in the envelope was a clipping from the Sunday edition of *The Greenville News* with this note written on the edge of the sheet, "Daddy, thought you might like to see this, John."

The clipping was a page of pictures and writings and was entitled "Who's Eligible?" It was a feature for Valentine's Day.

The reason it was sent to me was because in the article was a picture of Jeff McNeill along with a write-up about him being eligible. I believe it will be of interest to most people of the county because he is the son of Mayor and Mrs. John K. McNeill, Jr. of Raeford.

The article follows: Occupation: director of alumni relations, Clemson University. Nominator's Remark: "Full of fun and lots of personality...a bright, sunshiney kind of person." "Happiness," says Jeff, who lives on Pendleton Road in Clemson, "would be having a wife who wants to discuss books with him. The ultimate would be to read a book and have her tell me what she thinks about it."

"Most important, the girl would (See AROUND TOWN, page 13)

## Goal Is \$19,850

# Hoke County United Way Starts March 1

The Hoke County United Way of 1981 will be launched March 1 to raise at least \$19,850 to help support the agencies in the United Fund next year.

The agencies are the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, American Red Cross, White Cane (the Lions Club program to help the blind), 4-H clubs, the Rescue Squad, Senior Citizens, Developmentally disabled, Home Health Agency, and Carolina United of Charlotte. United Way is the fund-raising cam-

aign for the United Fund.

Kay Thomas, chairman of the United Way Board of Directors, said last week: "The board...is asking Hoke Countians to renew the interest in the United Way and the agencies it supports. The board itself pledges to be more aware of our community and its changing needs.

"Within the past month, the board has acted to avert a crisis of the local Red Cross chapter and voted to help initiate a county effort to stop child abuse. The board also heard a report/appeal from the chairman of the Hoke County Association for the Advancement of the Developmentally Disabled."

The major points in this year's campaign, she said are:

--United Way money supports nine Hoke County agencies. Money donated in Hoke County is used here.

--A real effort is being made this year to emphasize payroll deduction and year-round giving. The United Way is not like other money-raising efforts. It is not: "Come to Hoke County, organize, collect the money, go away for a year." It is: an effort to support Hoke County agen-

cies that do good work year-round.

This year's budget she called "more realistic" than budgets of recent years, which United Way fell short of reaching.

John Leandro, United Way chairman, said Tuesday, "We really want to meet the goal because it is an ongoing project." For examples, he said, the Red Cross doesn't know when disaster will strike, and pointed to the tornado that hit the Rockfish area early in the morning of February 11. The Red Cross, Leandro said, was alive to help victims because of the help it had received from the United Funds.

The Rescue Squad is on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Like the Red Cross chapter, the squad doesn't know when an emergency demanding its services will happen.

The Hoke County Home Health Agency provides nursing care and physical and speech therapy to patients in their own homes. It charges but only according to the patient's ability to pay. It is a private, nonprofit health care organization. No one is denied its services. The



John Leandro