



Superintendent, Other
Persons at Rochester

Mental Health

Newsletter

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Editorially Speaking

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The special Governors' Conference on Mental Health, held in Chicago on November 9 and 10, 1961, considered in some detail the final report of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health. The meeting was a significant turning point.

There were, to be sure, a fair number of clichés. This was in part a function of the inevitably political overtones of the occasion.

It also reflected deep emotion. For isn't it true that at times of intense emotion—love, anguish, grief, sympathy, shame—we are all reduced to clichés? There was an atmosphere of public confession. If dramatic, it nonetheless reflected appropriately the guilt, the moral albatross of society that is now our burden. How painful it is to realize the incredible waste and suffering that we have produced in what the Report calls "the circle of rejection"—letting our hospitals get too big, too crowded, too thinly staffed, too controlled by locks and laws, too totally enveloping of the life of the individual. The spectacle of practical-minded, unsentimental politicians grappling openly and honestly with these facts, their resolve to try to improve conditions, and the freedom and mutual respect in the communication between government professionals and mental health professionals were memorable. Altogether the experience was moving and exhilarating.

Some of the key issues are:

Manpower. Circumstances are serious. We can ill afford to fritter our energies in silly, doctrinaire disputes over the territories of our respective professions. We must train, recruit, stir up interest among the young, and make maximum use of non-medical and non-professional personnel.

Research. The proportion of what we know of the mind as against what remains to be found out is as the span of man's history in relation to the eons of geological time. As the inscription at Virginia Military Institute has it, we must keep "pressing up the hill of science."

Community-based mental health services. In this regard we in Minnesota are blessed with legal and administrative structures upon which much may be built. It is very attractive to think, for example, of amending the Community Mental Health Services Act to allow for state matching funds for in-patient services as well as the out-patient services which the law now provides. This then, could make possible a considerable expansion of psychiatric beds in general hospitals.

It might also be advantageous and possible to have some provision, through the Act or elsewhere, for day and night hospitals to be included in an integrated network of state hospitals, general hospital psychiatric services, community mental health centers and—a key element of potential strength—the county welfare departments.

There is not the space here to dwell on our shortages and problems. They exist. The big pay-off from our benevolent uncle may or may not occur. Meanwhile there is work to be done.

David J. Vail, M.D.
Medical Director

Visiting Minnesota December 26-29 to acquire first hand information about the state's public information and volunteer services program will be *Miss Louise Ta-cftau*, public relations consultant for the Kentucky Department of Mental Health. Miss Tachau received a grant from the Southern Region Educational Board for this purpose.

Medical Director Dr. *David J. Vail* will expand his teaching duties in the University of Minnesota school of hospital administration to include a seminar December 6 for the first group of students to enroll in the University's new doctoral program.

Selected to participate in a symposium at the University of Iowa December 11-12 is *Dr. Howard Davis*, chief of psychology and editor of the bi-monthly publication, "Current Conclusions." Purpose of the symposium, sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health, is to evolve new ways of disseminating to psychological practitioners the technical information which appears in some 500 professional journals each month.

New appointee to the Citizens Mental Health Review Committee is *Robert D. Wirt, Ph.D.*, professor of psychology, child development and psychiatry at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Wirt succeeds Dr. Allen Hodges, now USPHS consultant in psychology in Denver.

Dr. Herbert Dorken, director of Minnesota's community mental health services program, will address the mid-winter meeting of the Michigan Probate Judges Association January 5, at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

Dr. O. Hobart Mowrer, research professor of psychology at the University of Illinois, Urbana, will address a meeting of state psychologists at the St. Peter State Hospital January 16.

Re-elected for a two-year term at the October 16-17 meeting of the American Association of Volunteer Services were DPWs Miriam Karlins, as president, and Anoka's Volunteer Services Coordinator William Judkins, historian. Secretariat of the new national organization will be the APA's Mental Hospital Services.

Also an outgrowth of the October Mental Hospital Institute was the formation of a steering committee for a proposed organization of state program information officers. Headed by NIMH's consultant on communications and public information Hal Halpert, the new committee also includes Mrs. Miriam Karlins.

Two New Pamphlets on State Program Available for Free Distribution

"Mental Health in Minnesota," an 11-page tabular directory of state mental health services and facilities was released earlier this month. Also available is a revised edition of the leaflet, "Minnesota's Community Mental Health Services Program, a story of *continued progress.*" Both may be obtained by writing Medical Services Publications, Department of Public Welfare, Centennial Bldg., St. Paul.

'59 Winner of Jewett Award Appointed to Owatonna Post

David J. Johnson, M.S.W. and recipient of the 1959 Jewett Memorial Award as the outstanding student of social work at the University of Minnesota, has been named Child Care Supervisor at the Owatonna State School, effective November 20. Mr. Johnson will fill the post, vacant during the past year, formerly held by Francis Stevens.

Mr. Johnson has had over four years professional experience in the field of mental retardation. For the past year he has been employed as social work training supervisor and assistant chief social worker at the Kansas Neurological Institute, Topeka, Kansas. Prior to that, he was a member of the social work staff at the Northern Wisconsin Colony and Training School for three years.

Mr. Johnson is 28 and single. In addition to his duties at the Kansas Neurological Institute the past year, Mr. Johnson has served as public relations director of the Topeka NASW chapter, field instructor for the Kansas University School of Social Work and instructor for the undergraduate sequence in social work at Washburn University.

New Study Materials on State Program for the Retarded Released This Month

"New Vistas for the Mentally Retarded," a flannel-graph narrative on the state program for the retarded was furnished earlier this month to the University of Minnesota Agricultural Extension Service.

Copies of the flannelgraph script and accompanying illustrated figures will be mailed to County home extension offices throughout the state. Materials are distributed by county offices to 3287 organized homemaker clubs throughout Minnesota. Current membership is over 46,000 rural homemakers, who meet monthly to study topics of current interest.

The furnishing of study materials on the state mental health program by DPW's mental health information service was begun on a trial basis last year, and mid-way in the club year. At that time two programs were included—"Know Your Mental Health Program," an over-view of all phases of the state program and "New Horizons in Mental Health," a flannelgraph narrative on the hospital treatment program. Response to the initial offerings exceeded both expectations and materials. Additional study kits on the latter two subjects were furnished by DPW for inclusion in the curriculum again this year.

St. Lawrence State Hospital Social Service Chief to Head Program Here

Mrs. Elizabeth Rockey, supervisor of social services at the St. Lawrence State Hospital, Ogdensburg, New York, will be guest speaker at the January 19th meeting of hospital social services staff members at Glen Lake. Mrs. Rockey will outline the role played by the St. Lawrence Hospital social services staff in achieving the open hospital goal. Mr. Virgil Shoop, psychiatric social work consultant for the National Institute of Mental Health, Region VI office, will report on similar activities of social workers in other hospitals throughout the country.

