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E.K.
M Smith

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
CENTENNIAL OFFICE BUILDING
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55101

January 13, 1966

To: Chairman, County Welfare Board
Attention: Welfare Director

Public Health Nurse

Mental Health Center

School Superintendent

Subject: 1966 Field Clinics--Crippled Children Services

The initial purpose of the itinerant field clinics was to locate children with orthopedic defects. With advances in medical science, diseases such as osteomyelitis, tuberculosis of the bone, and poliomyelitis have virtually disappeared. With the decreasing number of orthopedic conditions, there has been an increasing interest in other conditions, such as mental retardation, epilepsy, heart lesions, learning problems in school, and cystic fibrosis.

The latter handicapping conditions are much more difficult to find at an early age than orthopedic conditions. Screening programs such as the hearing and vision screening provided by the Minnesota Department of Health are helpful in finding children suspected of having a handicap.

During the years, several changes have been observed. An increasing number of young children are coming to the clinics. Half of the children are now under five years. An increasing number of children have more than one handicap. The young child and children with multiple handicaps require more professional staff and a better organization to provide for their repeated evaluations and follow-up.

Even though many changes have occurred during the years, the itinerant clinics are still important in helping to locate handicapped children. The management of the child is easier when the staff can get first-hand information about the local facilities and the local workers who help the child and when his parents understand the recommendations. The clinics also provide a link between the community and the medical advances in the medical centers. This phase of service is exceedingly important these days, in view of the rapid medical advancements.

You will note that on the attached clinic schedule, additional specialists will be at certain clinics. This information should be helpful if you want a certain child referred.

Very truly yours,

Morris Hursh

Morris Hursh
Commissioner