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**CHILD-WELFARE MANUAL**



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38-CW.M-MSB

Section L

THE FEEBLEMINDED AND EPILEPTIC

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General statement on the feeble-minded and epileptic

Laws relating to the feeble-minded and epileptic

Court hearings in feeble-mindedness and epilepsy

Outside care of the feeble-minded and epileptic

    Responsibility of welfare board

    Waiting list

    Non-urgent custodial

    Outside supervision

Institutionalization of the feeble-minded and epileptic

Sterilization of the feeble-minded

Information concerning institutions for feeble-minded  
and epileptic

Forms used in connection with the feeble-minded and  
epileptic

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THE FEEBLE-MINDED AND EPILEPTIC

Minnesota's laws concerning the feeble-minded are based on the assumption that feeble-mindedness is an innate mental deficiency that once existing always exists and that therefore commitment to an institution for a period of time is not sufficient. Society has a never-ending obligation to the person not mentally equipped to compete with normal individuals on a fair basis. It must see that those sufficiently high grade to attempt competition in some particulars are protected so that they are not led into delinquency, are not taken advantage of financially, and that they have a decent environment and adequate physical necessities as well as schooling suited to their abilities, and other contacts for their happiness and spiritual well-being. It owes to the low grade individual a sheltered life with physical care and kind treatment, and to his family relief from an intolerable burden in caring for him. It owes to itself protection from the delinquencies of the feeble-minded which are bound to come if they are not trained, supervised, and at times segregated. It also owes to itself relief from future burdens which will be created if present problems are not faced. For these reasons, we have a law providing permanent guardianship -- though of course providing for court appeals so that anyone who feels a wrong determination is made has a means of rehearing.

An epileptic person frequently is a burden and even a disrupting influence in the family. Also, he is frequently unadjusted in the community and is usually dissatisfied and unhappy. For these reasons, as well as the fact that he is likely to be a financial burden on the community, the law provides for the same type of commitment to state guardianship as for the feeble-minded--this even though there may be a high intelligence quotient. The marriage law applies to epileptic persons but the sterilization law does not. The epileptic person has the same need for protection and care by the state as has the feeble-minded person, except that his need is frequently due to his physical disability and emotional instability rather than to low mentality.

Tests given by the Research Bureau indicate that, based on these tests, from four to five per cent of the population have intelligence quotients below 75. Thus, one hundred thousand individuals may be considered as sufficiently low mentally to need other individuals -- if not the State -- to stand back of them if they are to live up to the best of their own abilities and not get into difficulty. Certainly not all of these need to be under State guardianship, but only a small portion of those who do need supervision or institutional care are now wards. The number under guardianship in and out of institutions on 2-1-38 was 6174. It is hoped the bulletins in the manual will help the counties give supervision to those already under guardianship, as well as show the procedure for bringing others into probate court for determination of feeble-mindedness or epilepsy.

THE FEEBLEMINDED AND EPILEPTIC

Laws Relating to the Feeble-minded and Epileptic  
from  
Compilation of the Laws of Minnesota Relating to Children 1935

	Pages
	<u>160</u>
Abduction (removal from direct custody of Board of Control).....	160
Admission to Faribault and Cambridge.....	38
	39
Census of Feeble-minded.....	132
	133
Hearing for Restoration to Capacity.....	131
Marriage Prohibited.....	232
Petition, Examination, Commitment.....	126
	128
Responsibility for Yearly Payment.....	39
* Settlement fixed by commitment.....	201
Special Classes for Subnormals.....	188
Sterilization of Feeble-minded.....	42
Transportation by Sheriff.....	128
	129

\* Section 3161 was amended by Chapter 68, Special Session Laws 1935-36

MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF CONTROL  
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE  
CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

COURT HEARINGS IN FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS OR EPILEPSY

When petitions should be filed - I.Q. basis

Ordinarily no person should be considered for a hearing in feeble-mindedness with an intelligence quotient of over 75. There may be an occasional exception with a slightly higher I.Q. where a social history makes guardianship seem imperative. In such a case, however, a full social history, which includes school, health, work and conduct records, as well as family background and environment should be sent the state office and a recommendation asked. The school record should include not only grade reached and age at reaching it, but marks and teacher's estimate if possible. The health record should give special consideration to venereal infections, tuberculosis, congenital syphilis, post encephalitis or probable epilepsy. Intelligence quotients need not necessarily be considered in hearings in epilepsy. Petitions in feeble-mindedness should not be filed for persons with I.Q.'s of 70 or over and even in the high 60's until there has been a careful checking of school and conduct records, family background, and work record if there is one. Usually, with the higher I.Q.'s, filing a petition is not recommended unless there has been more than one test. The social history should be sent the State Office for recommendation of action before filing unless this information is already available there from other records.

Social basis

If intelligence quotients are within the proper range, petitions should be filed for the following groups:

1. Parents unable to give proper care to children (See bulletin on sterilization)
2. Adult or adolescent morons or high grade imbeciles who are delinquent, who are likely to marry, or to become parents illegitimately
3. Children of moron ability unable to receive adequate schooling in the local community or who are delinquent or are living in improper homes
4. Low grade children or adults who create an abnormal atmosphere even in a good home
5. Epileptic persons who are incapable of supporting themselves; who are burdens in their home; who are incapable of making an adjustment in the community. A doctor's statement that a person is epileptic should be secured before filing the petition.

Older persons of low intelligence who are not social menaces and not unhappy in the community but merely in need of financial support should not be brought in for hearings.

By whom filed

Commitment as feeble-minded for children under five is rarely advised if the intelligence quotient is above 50. There should always

## COURT HEARINGS IN FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS OR EPILEPSY

be several tests and definite advice from the State Office before a petition is filed. In every case where relatives realize that there is a feeble-minded person in the family and wish plans made, the petition should be filed by one of them. When a mentally incompetent person is not a social problem and the family does not desire commitment, the extended period of time intervening between court hearing and available space in the institution should be explained, but there should be no insistence on commitment. If the patient is one of a family presenting social problems or is himself such a problem, then the petition should be filed by the executive secretary or staff member responsible for the feeble-minded, after the situation has been brought to the attention of the Welfare Board and instructions given for such action. If there is probable opposition to the filing of a petition, whether the opposition is from the family or some other person in the community, the paid worker should never act without definite instructions from the Welfare Board. No person employed by the Board of Control is to file such a petition unless in some unusual situation the Board of Control takes action permitting this.

### Obvious feeble-mindedness.

When a person is very obviously feeble-minded, no test need be arranged for before commitment, but should be obtained later if needed to determine classification. In such cases, a careful description of physical development, conduct and abilities should be given. Frequently there are physical stigmata connected with obvious feeble-mindedness. An adult unable to understand more than a child of five or six could be so classified. An older child so classified could not understand more than the average child of about one-third his chronological age. If a small child is to be so classified there should be a doctor's statement with diagnosis and recommendation.

### Notice of Hearing

The law requires the court to send a notice to the Board of Control at least ten days before the hearing is held. The court determines to whom and in what manner other notices shall be sent. The notice to the Board of Control gives opportunity to see whether there is previous information in the office concerning the individual, and, if not, whether a test should be arranged. Here the cooperation of the Welfare Board is needed, as it is from the Welfare Board the State Office must request information. If the cooperation of the judge is obtained so that a representative of the Welfare Board is called by him when an individual files a petition, it would probably be helpful to the court, the Welfare Board, and the State Office. Identifying information and a statement indicating the reason for the petition could be sent the Board of Control or the Welfare Board when the court mailed the petition and information obtained at that time might save a trip to the home until a later date.

The Board of Control sometimes waives the ten day notice, but does not wish to do so unless there is an urgent reason why it is advisable. Reasons which may sometimes make it advisable are:

## COURT HEARINGS IN FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS OR EPILEPSY

1. A parent has brought an obviously feeble-minded child a long distance and a hearing at that time may make another trip unnecessary since the law implies the person must be present for the hearing
2. A mental examiner who has given the test is in the community and it is advisable she be present at the hearing
3. Immediate plans must be made and these are only possible if the person is under commitment. Even when there seems an emergency, unless the patient is obviously feeble-minded, notice cannot be waived until the State Office has the result of a mental test with which it is satisfied and there is some confirmatory information.

When a waiver is wished and there is not time to secure it by letter, it is well for the judge to phone the State Office, but the representative of the Welfare Board be prepared to give requested information by phone.

### Court Records

The executive secretary or staff member responsible for the feeble-minded should have all the information called for on Report of Data and Evidence and this should be verified if possible. If the judge wishes co-operation, this information may be typed on the blanks before the hearing so that the members of the Examining Board will have it before them. In the case of a borderline person or one where there is opposition to commitment, witnesses should be present so that the members of the Examining Board may question them. This is especially true where the worker does not have first hand knowledge of information recorded in the blank. The court keeps the original blank, sends two to the State Office (one for files there and one for the institution) and a fourth may be desired for the files of the Welfare Board. The court also sends to the State Office a Warrant of Commitment in duplicate, the original to be acknowledged and returned for its files. If the Report of Data and Evidence is used as a face sheet in county files as it is in the State Office, in many cases it will save making an additional face sheet except for subsequent information.

### Hearing

At least one person representing the Welfare Board should be at every hearing, -- the person filing the petition always. The person making the investigation for the Welfare Board is responsible for arranging for witnesses, whom the judge can subpoena if necessary. The Research Bureau will send certified reports of examinations and recommendation if the judge desires it or the Welfare Board feels it necessary. Ordinarily no one from the State will be present. If it seems advisable to have the mental examiner explain the tests the hearing should be arranged when she is scheduled for the county as the time in court will count as testing on the bill to the county. Occasionally where there is a particularly difficult local situation and it seems explanation of policies and discussion of plans with the Examining Board by someone from the Department for Feeble-Minded would be of very real assistance to the county program, this

## COURT HEARINGS IN FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS OR EPILEPSY

may be arranged. However, the responsibility for obtaining commitment must rest primarily with the local Welfare Board.

### Commitment necessary for feeble-minded

Feeble-minded persons will not be admitted voluntarily to the School for Feeble-Minded until there is no waiting list. Therefore, all for whom entrance may be desired at a later date should be committed to State guardianship as well as those presenting social problems in need of supervision

### Voluntary entrance of epileptics

Epileptic persons capable of determining their own plans may make voluntary application and be accepted on the same basis as others. However, an epileptic person should be committed to State guardianship unless he can be self-supporting and is mentally and emotionally able to determine his own plans without his choice proving a possible detriment to others.

### Examining Board

When a petition is filed in the Probate Court asking for the commitment to State guardianship of a patient as feeble-minded or epileptic, the judge appoints two physicians if epilepsy is alleged, and if feeble-mindedness is alleged two persons "skilled in the ascertainment of mental deficiency" to sit with him as an examining Board to determine whether the patient is epileptic or feeble-minded. If even two of the three persons on the Examining Board determine the patient is feeble-minded or epileptic it is the duty of the judge to commit him to the guardianship of the State Board of Control. The question of whether a person is obviously feeble-minded or epileptic, from the standpoint of whether the judge must have an Examining Board, is one to be determined by him and the county attorney. The latter must give written consent to forego the Board of Examiners. The determination as to whether persons are "skilled in the ascertainment of mental deficiency" and may sit with the judge on the Board is made by him and not by the Welfare Board or its representative. No person employed by the Board of Control may serve on the Examining Board and probably no one on or employed by the Welfare Board should consent to do so.

### Attitude of worker

Following a hearing in feeble-mindedness if the person is committed to guardianship the executive secretary or staff member responsible for the feeble-minded should explain carefully to the family and the ward (if he is sufficiently high grade to be able to understand an explanation) the meaning of commitment, its advantages and restrictions particularly concerning marriage. They should be told just what is expected from the ward and family in the way of cooperating with plans made by the worker. The family of a low grade child for whom institutionalization is desired should be told of the long waiting period and an effort made to help in temporary plans if outside assistance is needed.



COURT HEARINGS IN FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS OR EPILEPSY

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Both before and after the hearing, it should be kept in mind that commitment as feeble-minded is never a punishment even though delinquency may be one factor in determining that it is advisable; that it is for the benefit of the ward as well as for the benefit of the community; and that therefore all contacts must be kind and friendly though firmness and at times even force may be necessary.

MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF CONTROL  
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OUTSIDE CARE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED & EPILEPTIC

Responsibility of Welfare Board

Persons committed to the guardianship of the Board of Control as feeble-minded are to be supervised by the Welfare Board of the county where committed or living. They are wards of the Board of Control and there is a real responsibility to them as well as to the community. The State's responsibility for their well-being must be delegated to the local Welfare Board. Since there are handicaps such as lack of institutional space when this is needed, plans and supervision must of necessity frequently be unideal and makeshift. For convenience, wards may be divided into three groups:

Waiting list (W.L.) those who should be in the institution if there were space.

Non-urgent custodial (NUC) persons of low mentality (usually an I.Q. below fifty) whose relatives wish to keep them at home.

Outside supervision (O.S.) morons usually adult and therefore capable of being wholly or partially self-supporting or self-sustaining if living under favorable conditions and with adequate supervision. They are not in need of institutional care while so listed.

WAITING LIST

School Girls and Boys

At the present time (Feb. 1938) the waiting list is more than a thousand, and for girls and women extends back more than four years; for boys not quite three. This means there are some situations that require very careful planning and supervision - especially girls and boys of moron level who should be in a good environment and should be having adequate training. This may make it imperative to get authority for boarding care, secure adequate boarding homes, then keep in close touch to see that firm, patient, and kind care is given. Boarding care must be paid for by the local unit responsible for poor relief.

Return to Institution

Many wards counted as NUC or OS have been in the institution at an earlier date and owing to changes in local situations may again become in need of immediate institutional care. Owing to lack of institutional space, it is not always possible to have a ward re-entered when lack of adjustment in the community or delinquency would indicate its advisability. Every effort should be made to find a possible adjustment without asking for return and if there may be opposition in the community the request should have the approval of the Welfare Board. If a ward is of a group all of whom are socially unadjusted or delinquent, it is questionable whether the ward should be sent to the institution unless steps are taken to prevent the others from continuing in delinquency. Such an act can be interpreted as punishment and can then appear unfair.

## OUTSIDE CARE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED & EPILEPTIC

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### WAITING LIST

#### Non-State institution

Sometimes temporary plans may be made in a non-state institution - private school, religious institution, or county institutions - for a time. Catholic girls between eighteen and thirty years of age of moron intelligence urgently in need of institutional care because of environment or delinquency may be placed in the House of the Good Shepherd. Arrangements are made through the State Office and the same payment requested as for the School for Feeble-Minded only on a quarterly basis.

#### Low grade wards

It is sometimes well to consult a physician in planning for a low grade child, not only for the usual medical care necessary for all wards, but in the case of a hyperactive child to see if he can suggest a means of quieting him. In the majority of cases on the waiting list there is probably little to be accomplished by frequent contacts. One can suggest to the mother the need for great firmness and a very definite routine as a part of training. Also if possible it is well to provide the child with a sandbox if, as is frequent with low grade children, this furnishes entertainment. The mother should be cautioned to give only playthings, such as a soft ball, with which no one can be hurt. Until there is space in the institution the burden in the home usually must be borne. Even in such cases, a friendly contact every six months or year will convince the family of the interest of the Welfare Board and may prevent an emergency occurring by seeing early enough that the situation is urgent. It is sometimes necessary to attempt to make plans with relatives, temporary boarding plans, or put a house-keeper in the home to assist the mother in the care of the low grade persons. Boarding homes will be approved by the State for low grade children that could not be approved for normal or high grade subnormal children. Good physical care and kind treatment are the only real needs. Certification for the specific child or purpose must be obtained, however. A ruling of the Attorney General indicates such care is a proper public responsibility if the family is unable to pay for it even though not on relief.

#### Emergency requests

Institutionalization is not justifiable before the name is reached on the waiting list, even though local conditions are very bad, if local care is possible provided adequate board were paid. Should the Welfare Board feel justified in requesting earlier space, the emergency situation and the efforts made to care for it should be reported to the Department for the Feeble-Minded with the request. The letter should be sent in duplicate so that one copy may be sent to the institution.

### NON-URGENT CUSTODIAL

This is likely to be the group needing least attention since little can be done for them except to give good physical care. A visit every six months or year will make it possible to transfer the name to the waiting list before an emergency occurs if it is found conditions in the home are such that institutional care will soon be necessary.

## OUTSIDE CARE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED & EPILEPTIC

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### OUTSIDE SUPERVISION

This group requires all the time the worker can give, and then will need more. Each ward needs to have individual plans made and then individual attention to see that the plans are carried out. It must always be remembered that though grown physically, and frequently in experience, mentally we have children ranging from 8 to 11 years of age. There are usually several groups in a county:

#### Parents

The married person who may have been sterilized when classified in this group, and for whom an attempt is being made to keep the family together. It must be remembered that giving directions as to what to do, will not suffice. Frequently, the buying must be done for the family, the work for each day directed until routine is established, and specific do's and don't's given for the care of the children. These, of course, when the children are not present. For instance, a subnormal person with a growing child may want to be kind, but knows no means of discipline except slapping the child or yelling at him. When this is observed a concrete suggestion of something to do when the same situation occurs again may be followed at that time if it is specific and within the range of understanding and ability of the ward to carry out. Supervision of such a ward becomes a family problem and sometimes real assistance can be given by a "volunteer", an understanding neighbor who will help out day by day.

#### Ward as part of high grade family

The girl or boy who is part of a responsible family may need some friendly interest in order that the family have the backing of the visitor in securing proper response to discipline. Sometimes, too, a family is unconsciously unkind because of failing to remember the ward's limitations and he really needs a friend to straighten out the misunderstandings that may occur.

#### Ward as part of low grade family

If part of a low grade socially incompetent family, the ward should not be singled out from the family and higher standards demanded for him than for the others. The family should be treated as a unit and if not too bad to exist in the community, an effort should be made to raise the family standards as a condition of allowing the ward to remain in the home.

#### Ward capable of self-support

The most usual situation is the ward who supports himself and more frequently herself by work, provided it can be secured. Some of the responsibilities of supervision are:

- Secure work of appropriate kind for ward.
- Check carefully to see that place of employment is a proper one.
- (A girl should not work in a home where there is not a woman to direct her work).
- Be sure that too much is not expected of a ward in kind and amount of work.

## OUTSIDE CARE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED & EPILEPTIC

### Ward capable of self-support - continued

See that adequate wages are promised and paid.

Be sure there are proper social contacts and recreation.

Help ward save money.

Help ward buy clothing and make other purchases.

(Teach her how to shop)

If ward does not live where he works, living conditions should be investigated and approved.

It is also necessary to see that the ward has the right attitude towards his employer and other persons with whom he is associated and that he gives good service, as well as conducts himself in the proper manner. In listing the positive phases of supervision, the negative are implied: it sometimes requires much time to see that a ward does not associate with the wrong people and does not seek harmful recreation, even when other is provided.

### Frequency of Visits

The amount of supervision varies in O.S. cases from those where there are almost daily contacts to others that may require a visit only every three or six months. The worker will have to use her judgment to apportion the time that can be spent on this part of the work so as to get the best results possible.

### Children of Wards

The commitment of a mother or father or both of them as feeble-minded does not mean that the children are so committed. This requires action in juvenile court unless the child is also committed as feeble-minded in the probate court. If the children are legitimate and the home to be supervised as a unit there is probably no need of bringing them into juvenile court. However, if the home is to be broken up or if the child is illegitimate juvenile court action should be taken as otherwise there is no real authority for making plans for the child. If the girl and illegitimate child are living in her home and it is a good one, action may not be necessary unless specifically to give guardianship to her family. Usually it is well for juvenile court action to be taken when the child is quite young.

### Juvenile Court action necessary if mother removed

The Board of Control will not take a mother to the institution for indefinite care unless the juvenile court has committed the children to some permanent guardianship or it can be shown that the father is a thoroughly responsible parent, since it is the prerogative of the court and not the Board of Control to break up homes. If sterilization seems advisable in order that an attempt be made to hold the home intact and consent to sterilization is refused, the Board of Control will not remove the mother from the children if the juvenile court does not first act. In some instances, however, where a father contributes nothing to the home and it could be held together better if he were out, he will be institutionalized, leaving the children with the mother. Board action requesting this course is advisable when recommended by the executive secretary or staff member responsible for the feeble-minded.

MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF CONTROL  
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE  
CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FEEBLE-MINDED AND EPILEPTIC WARDS

Vacancy Offered

Space is offered in the institutions for the feeble-minded at Faribault and for the epileptic at Cambridge through the Welfare Board of the county in order of date of commitment to State guardianship, dependent upon sex, age, and mentality as related to available space. No person should be sent against the wishes of the family unless that person is a menace or nuisance in the community, or unless care in the home is grossly inadequate. If the executive secretary of the Welfare Board feels that, in spite of opposition, institutionalization is advisable, the matter should be voted on and recommended by the Welfare Board itself. After the space is offered, the Department for Feeble-Minded should be notified immediately if the space is or is not desired. If, at the end of two weeks, more time is needed for investigation to determine whether the space should be accepted, a request for this should be sent to the Department for Feeble-Minded in order that the space be held a little longer. Entrance for sterilization is arranged without reference to the waiting list. (See Bulletin on Sterilization for further information.)

Entrance Before Confinement

For the present, pregnant feeble-minded wards may be confined in the School for Feeble-Minded at Faribault. Plans may be made for entrance about three months before the date when confinement is expected or earlier if the mother needs treatment for a venereal infection. The baby must be removed from the institution by the county of legal settlement when three months old or when the superintendent of the institution notifies the Welfare Board that it should be called for. The baby is paid for at the rate of \$40.00 a year for time in the institution, and a layette should be provided before entrance. If pregnancy is discovered after entrance, the county Welfare Board will be notified and the layette should be sent. The form "Information on Pregnant Wards Entering Institution" should be sent in duplicate after necessary physical tests are given and reports secured from the doctor.

Plan for Entrance and Order to Sheriff

The Board of Control may issue an order to the sheriff of the county of commitment to take a person to the institution even though force may not be needed. The order is sent to the Welfare Board which is responsible for making plans with the sheriff and the family so that there are good social contacts. When possible the executive secretary or staff member responsible for the feeble-minded should go to the home with the sheriff unless definite arrangements have been made with the family previously. Should there be fear that the ward will leave the home or be removed by the family, and no notification is, therefore, given, the executive secretary or staff member responsible for the feeble-minded should make an especial effort to accompany the sheriff. If she cannot do so, care must be taken to explain the action to the family immediately after the sheriff has removed the ward. If the family can take a ward to the institution or the Welfare Board wishes to make other arrangements for someone to take him, it is satisfactory so far as the Board of Control is concerned. However, no girl or woman must be taken by a man unaccompanied by a woman. All persons, however, must be taken to the institution office by some responsible person and during business hours (9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.) on a day other than

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FEEBLE-MINDED AND EPILEPTIC WARDS

Plan for Entrance - continued

Sunday or a holiday. The Executive secretary or staff member responsible for the feeble-minded should give this information to the sheriff or the person taking patient to the institution.

Clothing

Each person entering the institution, whether for sterilization or for an indefinite period of time, must be provided with at least three changes of underwear, hose, night clothes, wash dresses or shirts and trousers, or overalls, adequate shoes and outer garments. Those of higher mentality are pleased if provided with a better dress or suit to wear when attending institution entertainments.

Vaccination

Each person must be vaccinated for smallpox unless there is a physician's statement showing a successful vaccination within the last five years. If it is possible to care for vaccination ahead of time, this may be done just prior to entrance, even on the way to the institution.

Payment

The charge to the county or the family for a person entering the State School for Feeble-Minded or Colony for Epileptics is \$40.00 per year. If the family is able to pay the amount, as a convenience the following agreement should be signed and sent in duplicate to the Board of Control:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_  
(relationship)  
of \_\_\_\_\_, hereby admit that I am legally  
responsible for \_\_\_\_\_ support and do hereby promise to pay  
annually to the superintendent of the \_\_\_\_\_  
(Colony for Epileptics or  
School for Feeble-Minded) the sum of FORTY DOLLARS (\$40.00) as  
provided by law as long as \_\_\_\_\_ remains in such institution.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date) (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

The first year's payment of \$40.00 is payable upon entrance, if by the family. If the family is unable to pay the whole amount upon entrance, the county must pay and can then collect from the individual in smaller amounts. The county must, of course, pay if the family refuses to pay or is indigent. The County Auditor should be notified by the Welfare Board if he is to be billed by the institution, and this information sent the Board of Control in duplicate. If a ward dies or leaves the institution before the period expires for which payment has been made, a refund will be made.

## INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FEEBLE-MINDED AND EPILEPTIC WARDS

### Exposure to Contagious Disease

If the ward has been exposed to a contagious disease, notify the Board of Control office and do not take the ward to the institution until the local doctor feels danger of infection has passed. If the patient enters and it is then learned there has been exposure, notify the superintendent of the institution at once.

### Delayed Entrance

When a person is to enter the institution (unless this is within 6 months after court commitment) the executive secretary of the Welfare Board is requested to furnish the Board of Control in duplicate the form, **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AT TIME OF ENTERING INSTITUTION**, adequately filled out.

### Paroles

All paroles from the institution must be approved by the Department for Feeble-Minded and Epileptic. After plans are completed following correspondence by the Department for Feeble-Minded with the county Board and the institution, the latter should be notified by the family or local staff member responsible for the feeble-minded when the patient will be called for. This must be on a week day, not a holiday, and during business hours.



MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF CONTROL  
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STERILIZATION OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED

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To Whom Law Applies

The sterilization law as regards the feeble-minded applies only to persons committed to the guardianship of the State Board of Control as feeble-minded in the same manner that all such commitments are made. The law and the advisability of such an operation for a person who appears to be feeble-minded and, therefore, a proper subject for whom to file a petition but who has not been committed may be discussed with the family. Consents, however, cannot be taken until after the commitment is made. After sterilization, the person remains a ward of the Board of Control, and the responsibility for supervision and assistance in adjustment rests upon the county welfare boards as agents of the Board of Control.

Sterilization Only in Accordance with Law

No person who has any official connection with the Board of Control or who represents the Board of Control should take part in making plans for an operation except where all legal provisions and policies of the Board of Control are complied with. This means the operation will be performed at the State School for Feeble-Minded. Many reputable physicians perform such operations, but if this is done, no representative of the Board of Control must take part in discussion or in initiating discussion, as this might be interpreted as authorization.

Plans Following Operation

The Board of Control will not make a bargain with any person that, if sterilization is agreed to, some specific plan will be made. Therefore, no person speaking for the Board can do this. On the other hand, the policy of the Board is that every person who can be out of the institution should be and often plans can be made more easily and satisfactorily following sterilization. This can always be stated and definite plans that are considered may be outlined. However, there is always the possibility that conditions may change, necessitating a different plan. The recommendation of the local Welfare Board concerning the advisability of parole to the local community following sterilization of a person who has been in the institution for an extended time, is usually accepted. An effort is made to remove as many as possible from the institution while at the same time considering the best interests of the community and the ward.

When Approved

Ordinarily only women between eighteen and forty inclusive are approved for operations for the purpose of sterilization. Exceptions are made, however, at the upper limit for married women who are still giving birth to children and at the lower limit where girls are well developed physically and conditions indicate this might be wise for social reasons. In either case, before consents are taken, the situation should be presented to the Board of Control in order that definite approval may be given. An operation will ordinarily not be performed on a woman in less than three months after the birth of a child even though she may not nurse the baby. There is no upper age limit for men and the lower limit for boys is approximately the same as for girls.

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## STERILIZATION OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED

### Entrance to Institution for Operation

A person committed as feeble-minded may enter the institution just for the operation very soon after a consent to sterilization signed by the nearest relative has been sent to the Board of Control. He or she must be removed from the institution at the end of the time necessary to remain from a physical standpoint (this is at least six weeks following the operation for a woman and two weeks for a man) unless, due to some unusual circumstances, definite arrangements are made for the person to remain a longer period. This, however, is not usually possible or advisable. Persons going to the institution for an operation must be taken at local expense, unless by the family. An order to the sheriff may be issued provided it is merely for the purpose of providing a means of transportation and consent of the nearest of kin has already been secured. Care at the rate of \$40.00 per year for the time in the institution must be paid by the relatives or by the county. The Welfare Board must arrange for the ward to be called for and returned to the county.

### Plans for Family if Parent enters

If the ward entering the institution is a married person with a family, the welfare board should have a definite and satisfactory plan made for the care of the children while the parent is away from home. It is well to have this in mind before discussing sterilization, as feeble-minded parents cannot be expected to make satisfactory plans for the family when one member is taken away. If the husband and wife are both committed as feeble-minded, the consent of the nearest relative of the one considered for an operation must be taken. If both are committed as feeble-minded, it is frequently advisable for both to go to the institution at the same time for operations.

### Relatives' Consents

When there is a family to be provided for, it is generally best to talk with the relatives before taking up the matter with the ward. In many cases, it is best to have the consent of the relative and plans made before mentioning it to the individual. If a ward is unmarried or the spouse of another ward and both parents are living, the consent of both should be obtained. If parents are not living and there are several brothers and sisters, it is usually advisable to ask for the consent of more than one.

### Affects of Operation

Families and individuals can be told that sterilization will not interfere with the normal processes of nature, including marital relations. It will only prevent conception following intercourse.

### Type of Operation

The sterilization operation for women -- a tubectomy -- necessitates an abdominal incision since the Fallopian tubes are cut and embedded. The surgeon examines the appendix, and, if this appears to be in abnormal condition, removes it, thereby in some cases improving later health. The operation for men -- a vasectomy -- does not necessitate an abdominal incision since it only consists of cutting the cord.

## STERILIZATION OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED

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### Statistics

Ten years ago, statistics for the type of operation now performed upon women in Minnesota, indicated that from one to two per cent of failures (that is, conception following intercourse) could be looked for. For operations performed in Minnesota prior to 1933 there were several failures, averaging a little more than one out of every hundred operations. There have been no failures for operations performed since 1932 and at that time the technic of the surgeon was changed so that it seems improbable there will be further failures.

### No pressure

The Board of Control does not wish pressure brought if it is felt by the person legally responsible for consent that it is wrong. However, it is true that under some conditions a sterile person may be safely tried on parole, when under the same conditions a person not sterile should have the protection of the institution.

### Frequency in Operating

At the present time, Dr. Eitel of Minneapolis is authorized by the Board of Control to perform operations at the School for Feeble-minded. Operations are performed several in a day as often as a group of ten is approved and ready, sometimes once in two weeks. Usually a woman going in for an operation will be in the institution from two to three months and a man from one to two months.

### Length of Time in Institution

Definite assertions, however, cannot be made as to the length of time to be spent in the institution, as, occasionally, after a person enters, some other physical condition is discovered, or there may be other unavoidable causes for delay.

MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF CONTROL  
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE  
CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

INFORMATION CONCERNING INSTITUTIONS FOR FEEBLE-MINDED & EPILEPTIC

A blank containing information, as follows, is given or sent to the correspondent of an inmate by the School for Feeble-minded. It is necessary that county welfare boards be thoroughly familiar with it. The same regulations apply to the Colony for Epileptics at Cambridge.

MINNESOTA STATE SCHOOL AND COLONY  
FARIBAULT, MINNESOTA

Instructions to Correspondents

Direct all letters of inquiry to the Superintendent, Station "A", Faribault, Minnesota. Always give full name of patient, and in signing your name, give the full post office address.

All letters and packages for persons in the institution should be addressed to the person for whom the letter or package is sent, in care of Station "A", Faribault, Minnesota. Letters are sent out once a month by patients who are able to write.

For each patient we desire the telephone number or the full telegraphic address of at least one relative or correspondent. Remember to notify us of any change of address.

\* Patients may be visited by relatives any day, including Sundays and Holidays from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except that for patients in the hospital the hours are 10:00 to 11:00 A.M., and 2:00 to 4:00 P.M.

We will endeavor to answer promptly all letters of inquiry, however often inquiry is made.

In case of any marked change in a patient's condition, or any illness, we will telephone, telegraph or write to the correspondent, whichever method seems most fitting.

When telephoning to the school concerning a patient, it will facilitate a prompt reply if there is included in the call the name of the person about whom information is desired. Thus put in a call: "State School and Colony, Faribault, Minnesota -- concerning John Smith". The physician having charge of the patient will then be called to answer.

The correspondent or relative may furnish clothing or extras of any kind, but it is advisable to write the Superintendent to learn the articles desirable. Direct the package to the patient, marking the package with the name of the sender.

Money should not be left or sent directly to a patient, but should be deposited or sent to the main office where it will be credited upon our books; accounts kept of all money spent, and the balance returned when the patient leaves. The patient may request certain articles which will be purchased, if approved, out of money on deposit in his account. The sender of the money may specify the articles he wishes purchased. The institution maintains a commissary store in which patients may purchase candy, fruit, toilet articles, trinkets, etc.

INFORMATION CONCERNING INSTITUTIONS FOR FEEBLE-MINDED & EPILEPTIC

Instructions to Correspondents  
(continued)

All dental work as cleaning, treatment, extracting, and filling is done without expense to the patient. Bridge and plate work will have to be paid for by relatives.

Operations are not performed without the consent of relatives unless there is question of life or death, when the Board of Control may consent.

If the patient should complain of his care or treatment, we urge a prompt report of the complaint so that we may investigate its accuracy. We wish to have the patient as satisfied as possible; to remove, if we can, the cause of his complaint; and to prevent carelessness, neglect or mistreatment.

As all persons admitted to the school have been committed to the guardianship of the State Board of Control, it is necessary to obtain permission from the State Board of Control before the person can be permitted to leave the school for a vacation or on parole, except for patients from Hennepin, Ramsey, or St. Louis County, where relatives can make arrangements directly with the Social Welfare Workers. Consents for vacations ordinarily are not granted except during July and August, and not during the first year following their admittance. No person is allowed to leave the institution on vacation or parole unless called for at the office by a responsible adult.

It is advisable for parents or relatives not to visit a new patient during the first month. This will give the patients time to adjust themselves to the life of the institution. The alleged father of an illegitimate child may not visit at any time without a written permit from the Child Welfare office.

E. J. Engberg, M.D.  
Superintendent

\* Visiting hours at Cambridge end at 4:00 P.M.

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Additional Information on Institution

Institution Placement

All new patients are admitted to the Hospital for study as to physical and mental condition after which each case is presented at a group conference to determine the program best suited to each individual. In general, children with intelligence quotients under 50 will not be in the school group. Some of those with I.Q.'s in the 30's and 40's will have classes primarily for teaching muscular coordination and speech while those still lower have only habit training. The latter two groups are there for custodial care and, if this is given in the home, there is no reason to persuade the parents to institutionalize the children. Definite training is

## INFORMATION CONCERNING INSTITUTIONS FOR FEEBLE-MINDED & EPILEPTIC

### Institution Placement - continued

given to morons of school age in academic and vocational work, but no trades are taught. The older patients may receive vocational training, as for example in housekeeping and farm work, but they are primarily helpers or laborers.

### Recreation

A definite part of the school program is to make life as pleasant as possible for all patients capable of enjoying recreation. In order to accomplish this end, programs and entertainments, including movies, are presented periodically. Athletic activities are organized and a library service is available for all who can profit thereby. A boys' band and group singing are in charge of competent musical directors. Religious services, both denominational and non-denominational, are conducted in the Assembly Hall each week.

### Mail

One person - parent or relative if such exists -- is chosen as correspondent for each ward. Wards able to write may do so once a month. Incoming and outgoing mail is read, but rarely censored. Others may write to wards and, where no family is likely to write, letters written by the Welfare Board or some local person are greatly appreciated.

### Requests to Superintendent

No reports are sent out about wards who are unable to write unless they are ill. The superintendent will answer inquiries of families concerning progress. No letter should be written to an inmate of the institution regarding a vacation or parole until after this has been recommended by the authorities at the institution and discussed and approved by the Welfare Board and the Board of Control. Any requests for change or explanation of placement should be taken up with the superintendent or appropriate officer and not the attendant.

### Vacations

Welfare Boards are asked to make recommendations on the basis of local conditions for or against vacations, and their recommendations are accepted if in accordance with the regulations in this bulletin. If there is no doubt locally as to the advisability of the vacations, the executive secretary or staff member responsible for the feeble-minded may make the recommendation without board action. Care should be taken to see that a responsible adult accompanies a ward to the institution when leaving for or returning from a vacation. Women and girls leaving the institution on vacation or parole must not be called for by a man unaccompanied by a woman unless the man is her father or her husband.

MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF CONTROL  
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE  
CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

FORMS USED IN CONNECTION WITH THE FEEBLE-MINDED

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I. INFORMATION ON PREGNANT WARDS ENTERING INSTITUTION

"Information on Pregnant Wards Entering the Institution" is mimeographed and furnished to the counties by the State Department to be used when a request is made for a ward who is pregnant to go to Faribault before confinement. This form should be filled out in duplicate and sent to the State Office. All information possible should be secured from the physician and, if any of the information is not really verified, this should be indicated.

II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AT TIME OF ENTERING INSTITUTION

The form "Additional Information at time of Entering Institution" is mimeographed and furnished to the counties by the State Department. This is to be filled out in duplicate and sent to the State Department when a person is to enter the institution who has been committed for more than six months. It is presumed that the "Report of Data and Evidence Presented in Hearing" has been filled out fully and accurately at the time of the hearing, so that the information requested on this form is only that which supplements the earlier one. As much of the physical information as possible should be obtained from the doctor. All information should be verified if possible. Any needed comments can be made on the reverse side.