



# newsletter

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THE GOVERNOR'S CITIZENS MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

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117 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, ST PAUL, MINN, CEDAR 4721

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May 1949

Surveying the gains of the 56th session of the Minnesota legislature Governor Luther W. Youngdahl announced, "The end of the session marks the beginning - not the end - of the citizens mental health drive. The big job is still ahead...consolidating present gains and extending the program into the future."

Workers in the citizens mental health drive in every section of the state, standing by for the call to further action, took time to catch their breaths and review accomplishments before starting on the second step of the "long road ahead".

They had just finished participating with Governor Youngdahl in an arduous first-step drive to obtain those funds which the Governor in his inaugural message stated would start Minnesota on the "long road ahead" to modern mental health services.

As a result of these labors, Topeka's famed Dr. Karl A. Menninger, and Dr. S. Spafford Ackerly, of Kentucky, former president of the American Ortho-psychiatric Association, who were in Minnesota for a Town Meeting of the Air broadcast, were able to state:

"Minnesota comes nearer than any state of the nation to meeting the recommendations of the American Psychiatric Association. Minnesota has taken the lead in mental health treatment due to your extraordinary Governor and the fine mental health committee in your state."

the first step in the long road ahead

When the 56th session of the Minnesota legislature adjourned it had:

- ...broken the backbone of the vicious caste system and custodial approach which had shackled Minnesota's mental patients to the asylum past,
- ...enacted the first law in any state recognizing mental illness as a sickness, placing on the statute books for this and following sessions an official policy for the State of Minnesota - to provide mental health services consistent with humane obligations and professional standards,

...appropriated \$28,000,000 of the \$30,000,000 biennial operating budget requested by the Governor.

what the appropriations provided for

- ...a Commissioner of Mental Health at \$12,500 a year to administer the new program,
- ...1200 additional doctors, nurses, psychiatric aides, therapists, social workers, dietitians, and other psychiatric workers,
- ...increased salaries,
- ...a 40-hour work week,
- ...SINGLE STANDARD OF FOOD for patients and employees,
- ...re-classification of the asylum-rooted "attendant" classification to that of psychiatric aides,
- ...two teaching hospitals at Hastings and Rochester for the training of psychiatric residents and workers in related fields, with the eventual objective being to make every hospital a teaching hospital,
- ...\$100,000 for research,
- ...two clinics, to be supplemented by as many out-patient clinics as additional hospital personnel permits,
- ...increased supplies, equipment, and clothing for all hospitals and patients.

the "goldfish bowl"

Probably no administrators in Minnesota history have had the problems now confronting the Governor, his department heads, the forthcoming Commissioner of Mental Health, and the hospital superintendents. From here on those responsible for administering the program will live in a goldfish bowl, with every move subject to the scrutiny of friends and critics alike.

Minnesota hospitals will have funds they've never had before. And a legislature whose present generosity is qualified for the future by "now-show-me" attitudes will have to have its expected demands for proof and improvement adequately answered at the next session, particularly if further expansion of the program at that time is to be supported.

On the other hand, administrators and superintendents will require time to put the new program into effect. That they can do the job, given sufficient time, is evidenced by many administrative changes already made since the beginning of the mental health drive.

NOTE: One of the most dramatic restraint elimination projects in mental hospital history has been successfully completed at the Moose Lake State Hospital. This institution, once the scene of one of the highest known restraint rates in the country, is now operating completely free of restraints, making it the second hospital in the state to have this distinction. Hastings was the first, having completed its restraint elimination project even prior to the mental health drive. A third hospital is expected to be restraint-free within two weeks.

Not always given proper attention, however, in the general enthusiasm for the scope of the mental health victory is the fact that the \$2,000,000 cut out of the full \$30,000,000 request was for personnel to meet completely the minimum standards of the APA. (The new personnel granted will bring Minnesota up to 75% to 85% of minimum APA standards.) The cut in this key to treatment will make difficult the fulfillment of all claims for the program as originally submitted.

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#### personnel - the big problem

Trained personnel, not brick and mortar, heals the wounds of mental illness. The recruitment, training, and organization of new personnel is the big problem facing administrators of the new program.

The first wave of new personnel is scheduled to be absorbed on July 1st. Successive numbers of new personnel will be staggered each six months, with the full quota permitted by the legislature to be employed by the end of the biennium.

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#### recruitment - a new concept in administrative and community relationships

Hardly was the ink dry on the last bill to be signed when the Governor called in department heads to plan immediate steps for recruitment. From the new Commissioner of Mental Health to the new psychiatric aides, personnel is needed.

Will this new personnel be obtained? Yes, believe the Governor, the Division of Public Institutions, and the Civil Service Commission, particularly if the citizens mental health drive furnishes the same energy in this phase of the drive, as it did in legislation.

The citizens mental health drive represents a concept in administrative and community relationships which has been hailed throughout the country. It is symbolized in the statement of policy of the Governor's Citizens Mental Health Committee, which claims that this arrangement "constitutes a partnership between the public and the chief executive designed to give Minnesota a modern mental health system."

The citizens mental health drive, which successfully fought the battle for increased quotas and increased salaries for additional personnel, is now being called on by the Governor for assistance in helping to find that personnel. The Minnesota Civil Service Commission, in cooperation with the Governor's Citizens Mental Health Committee, is in the process of sending members of the drive information on new positions and salaries.

NOTE: All applicants for positions should be referred to the  
Minnesota State Civil Service Department,  
122 State Office Building, St. Paul 1.

#### early signs

Even before the formal opening of the public recruitment and receipt of information by members of the drive, the first impact of the opportunities within the new program was seen.

Friday, May 13, turned out to be a good omen for future prospects, when more than 30 Twin City internes gathered at the first recruitment clinic at Hastings State Hospital. In a meeting presided over by Division of Public Institution's Dr. Royal C. Gray, the internes heard of the economic and professional opportunities now available from Governor Youngdahl, Dr. Francis J. Braceland, Mayo Clinic member of the Governor's Advisory Council on Mental Health, and his associate, Dr. Howard Romo. Drs. Ralph Rossen, Hastings hospital superintendent, and Harold Buckstein, Minneapolis neuro-surgeon, reviewed brain surgery done at Hastings. The enthusiasm of the internes present spoke well for the future.

Members of the Minnesota Unitarian Mental Hospital Committee early opened the door for college recruitment by scheduling job employment rallies for Civil Service representatives on the campuses of St. Thomas, Gustavus Adolphus, University of Minnesota, Augsburg, St. Olafs, Macalester, and St. Cloud Teachers.

At the same time, mental hospitals report a wave of spontaneous interest in job openings. One already claims more than 100 applicants for positions available July 1st.

At Hastings and Willmar, summer slack will be taken up by volunteer units from the Unitarian and Friends Service committees. Rochester will have a summer unit of social work students from the University of Minnesota. Most positions thus filled are in the psychiatric aide classification.