

DATE : January 8, 1959

STATE OF MINNESOTA

DEPARTMENT Public Welfare

*Office Memorandum*

TO : E. J. Engberg, M.D., Faribault State School & Hospital

FROM : Dale C. Cameron, M.D. *u*

SUBJECT: Correspondence Concerning Personnel Shortages

Transmitted herewith is a self-explanatory letter to the Governor, together with his reply. You will notice that the writer asked that her name not be used in any inquiry the Governor might make about the situation. I am sure that you will respect the writer's confidence. My point in sending it to you is first that I think you should have an opportunity to see such letters and, second it occurred to me that there might be some explanation of the dining situation described incident to the new building program. Perhaps if we could write something back to the mother on this basis it might help her to understand the situation a little more fully. Your help with this letter and your suggestions will be much appreciated.

DCC:mts  
Attach.

**Faribault State School & Hospital**

**Dr. Dale C. Cameron, Director  
Division of Medical Services  
Dr. E. J. Engberg, Superintendent**

**January 16, 1959**

**Correspondence Concerning Personnel Shortages**

Your memo of January 8 in regard to the above matter described a situation which we had recognized as unsatisfactory and which was under careful study at the time your memo with the letter you enclosed, and which we are returning herewith, arrived. I have respected the writer's confidence that her name be not used in any inquiry made.

The building concerned in this matter is only one of several in which the problem of understaffing has become serious since the transfer was started to place in use the beds in the two new dormitories each having 100 beds, for the patients who had lived in the old administration building. None of them were suitable for the beds provided as replacements in the two new dormitories, Birch for female and Seneca for male patients, so a rather general redistribution of patients throughout the institution has been necessary including placing school boys in Mohawk. This building had previously been known as Sioux building and occupied by 65 adult male patients who were our best behaved and physically fit patient workers requiring a minimal employed staff to supervise them in the building. They ate in the dining room in the basement of the building but we planned to discontinue the use of it and feed them in the new cafeteria that was being prepared in the adjoining Chippewa building. Unfortunately, there has been a delay in the completion of it so that instead of being available in October of last year, it will not be ready, apparently, earlier than in March. Originally we had planned to place the school boys in Chippewa building but finally decided that the Mohawk building would be more suitable as it is closer to the school rooms in the new activities building and specially so in that it provides a separate building instead of a multi-purpose one.

When the school boys were moved to Mohawk, it was possible to provide only minimal staffing for it. They continued to eat their meals in the dining room in the old administration building and will have to do so until the dining room in Chippewa is completed. This is being enlarged and converted to a modern cafeteria. The food will be delivered to it by overland truck in heated carts instead of by underground tunnel as now is true for the dining room in Chippewa and would be true for Mohawk if we used its dining room. The new system will be a decided improvement in palatability of food and in sanitary standards.

We have been building up the staff in Mohawk and by early next week expect to have an adequate staff of aides and trainees assigned for duty there. Vacancies and illness in aide staff have delayed adequate staffing which is being done by diverting staffing from other but less seriously under-

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staffed buildings. I might add that had there not been an unavoidable lag between the time of transfer of patients to Brainerd and Cambridge and the time of admission of replacements for them from the waiting list, it would have been impossible to provide the nurses and aides necessary to meet the minimal staff needs for patient buildings throughout the institution. As it is, the new Seneca building which was opened in October for male patients has been filled only to half capacity but we shall soon have it in full operation; only half of a male infirmary building, Osage, is in use as the patients were of the right type and could be and were transferred together with their aide personnel when Seneca was opened. In addition, we have a building (Lilacs) with 47 beds which was formerly occupied by girls as was the adjoining Riverview building. These buildings for administrative purposes are now poorly located for female patients and we had need to increase the number of beds in the institution for male patients so assigned both buildings to the division for male patients at the time we exchanged the boys remaining at Lake Oaresso for girls we transferred from here. The Riverview building is filled with 73 male working patients but Lilacs building is not in use so the staff formerly assigned there has been transferred elsewhere. We fear that it will not be possible to put Lilacs into service until additional staff is available as a result of additional aides authorized for the next biennium.

We are sorry the writer did not want her name known here. I hope that she can be assured that she need not hesitate to bring matters to my attention directly or to the Social Service Department. We are always anxious to know of any criticisms or suggestions that relatives may have for the welfare, comfort and happiness of the patients as they often are helpful to us.

I believe that a letter from Miss Thomson to the writer of the letter would be very helpful and I shall appreciate it if one is sent. We shall continue to try to provide the best care and treatment possible for her son and hope that her distress may be replaced by a feeling of happiness and be satisfied that his needs are being met.

I am glad to be able to report that the boy's state of health has been very good. If there has been any change, there has been an improvement since coming to Mchawk, the aide in charge informed me today.

EJH:aj

Two extra copies enclosed.

Note: Copy of the Governor's letter returned.