

Discussed at Exec. Committee meeting 10-26-64 and learned that recommendations had been that no straw vote be made except that school dept. might have it as a learning procedure, however, Mr. Knack has arranged not to have this in this year's program. There was general concurrence in the recommendations as made.

MEMORANDUM

24 September 1964

Dr. E. J. Engberg

Dr. Engberg

TO: Administrators
- Institutions for the mentally ill and mentally retarded

FROM: Ardo M. Wrobel, Chief
Rehabilitation Therapy Programs

SUBJECT: Operation Citizenship: Straw Voting on Election Date (Re: Dr. Vail's memo 11 September 1964)

Dr. Vail asked me to coordinate the development of this program in the institutions and I would like to briefly run through points that were covered in the Superintendents' Meeting.

In the institutions planning on having a straw vote, patients should have an opportunity to cast a secret ballot in an accessible central place with assimilated ballots. These ballots should include the presidential, vice presidential and senatorial candidates with perhaps some local issues. Candidates from at least the two major parties should be listed on the fake ballot.

Voting should be done on election day November 3 which hopefully would include an opportunity for patients to watch election returns on television (you may want to plan an election night party in the auditorium). Patients and/or volunteers could assist in carrying out the actual voting program by advertising in the hospital, arranging for local politicians to come in, manning the polling place, serving coffee at the election party, etc.

Local politicians can be invited to explain their party positions in a meeting held for that purpose. News articles from local papers, displays, etc. may be a part of this effort providing that staff do not take part in promoting a candidate or a party.

The objective of such effort is to give the patients an opportunity to "vote", to encourage them to exercise their right to vote if and when it is restored, to create interest in governmental and political affairs and to determine whether patients "vote" along the same lines as the general public.

Results of these straw votes should be sent to me following tabulation. I would also appreciate it if you would send me results of previous elections that may have been held in your hospital during the past four or five years.

In the institutions where there may be a question as to whether such a straw vote should be held, the patients should be consulted (for example, the patient council) in order to determine whether the patients want to carry out or assist the staff in carrying out such an activity. The role of the staff being that of giving patients an opportunity to vote if they want to.

I would appreciate it if you would let me know what your plans are and if I can be of any further assistance, please call on me.

sak

cc - Dr. David J. Vail