TO: All Institutions  
Attention: Medical Directors
Administrators
Nursing Services
Social Services
Mental Health Executive Council
Committee on Humane Practices
DPW Cabinet

FROM: David J. Vail, M. D.
Medical Director

SUBJECT: Admission procedures: photographs, fingerprints, etc.

I have given thought to the discussion at the December 18, 1964, Superintendents' meeting concerning photographs, fingerprints, etc., on admission. I suggest the following approach:

1. Fingerprints: Not to be done henceforth. Fingerprinting in connection with police inquiries should be handled by the police agencies themselves.

2. Photographs:

   2.1 Mugshots are out. "Mugshot" is defined as the bright light - serial numbers - passport photo routine. (Serial numbers are out, whether held before the chest, or over head.)

   2.2 Photographs are optional, provided certain conditions are met that could be viewed in ordinary judgment as non-dehumanizing. Thus one thinks of an attractive "studio" setting rather than the drab room associated with the mugshot... photograph taken some days after admission when the patient is looking and feeling acceptable... use of volunteers and/or patients' camera club... requesting relatives to bring a recent snapshot... etc.

   2.3 Disregard henceforth Institutions Manual instructions concerning admission photograph.

3. Effective immediately.