

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

January 13, 1967

FROM: Marlis Butler, Chief
Social Service Programs

Re: Evaluation of Social Service Program
Faribault State School & Hospital

The social service staff, in general, is untrained, "devoted" to patients, loyal to the institution, resulting in a passive unimaginative approach and a protective attitude toward patients. This description might also describe the institution as a whole. It is a kindly paternalistic philosophy caught up in the red tape of a bureaucracy.

Miss Caroline Perkins has been Director of the Social Service since 1926. She was one of the first trained psychiatric social workers in the State of Minnesota. The department was not enlarged until sometime in the 50's. Miss Perkins lived on the hospital grounds until 4 years ago and worked seven days a week and many evenings. She has trouble delegating responsibility and setting expectations for her staff. The state program has passed her by, and she continues to operate as she did 30 years ago.

Dean Nelson is assistant director of the department. He has an MSW and previously worked at Faribault and Brainerd State School. He has many plans for the department when and if he is appointed director. In the meantime he is attempting to set standards and institute procedures for better organization and in line with modern practice and philosophy for the retarded. His manner is quiet and passive and progress is slow. He also supervises most of the untrained workers.

There are eight untrained social workers I and II. Seven are assigned to the units and the other is assigned to admissions. Two of these people had some previous social work experience. For the most part they are hard-working, dedicated workers.

A review of Sunnyside Unit (509 patients) and Center Unit (616 patients) pointed up some glaring problems. There is not sufficient staff of any kind to thoroughly evaluate each patient, let alone carry out a program, if there is one. Mrs. Kading, SW I for Center Unit, spends most of her time trying to answer county and family correspondence and prepare patient histories for team conferences. Many of these young patients could be considered for community placement if some one had the time and inclination to aggressively work with the county welfare departments to arrange an appropriate community plan.

Sunnyside Unit has 2 social workers. The workers spend most of their time trying to locate and gain the interest of "lost relatives". There is a relative group formed for one of the buildings, and it appears this group has been encouraged to buy toys and equipment for patients who do not know what to do with the toys. On 2 separate visits the men in Pawnee were milling around, the toys neatly stacked in a cupboard, and no staff in sight. Intense effort by the 2 social workers has resulted in establishing correspondents for 103 of the 122 patients.

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The 12 men in the Independent Living Unit (a part of Sunnyside Unit) have been completely evaluated, have an individual program with goals and expectations and are being prepared for community placement. This program is supervised by Herman Hornal, SW II.

Intensive recruitment has produced no MSW's for this institution. In the past 3 years no state stipend student has chosen to work at any state institution for the retarded. I recommend that a committee be appointed to work with the Civil Service Commission on this problem. Why not a hardship allowance for those positions which cannot now be filled at the appropriate level of training.

A new Director of Social Service, fully trained and aggressive, will not alter the social service department under the present administration. Dr. Engberg's philosophy is no different than Miss Perkins'. Dr. Smith is changeable depending on who he last talked with. Standards which are explicit and enforceable must be devised so that key positions can be evaluated annually. Miss Perkins and Dr. Engberg have been allowed to grow old and lag behind the field because the system lacks such standards. Built into the standard could be a mandatory age for retirement. This would be the most charitable way to make room for new leadership.