

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
MEMORANDUM

To : Institution Superintendents

From : Jarle Leirfallom

March 3, 1954

Re : Contacts with Legislators

It is apparent from the fact that the Legislature has created quite a number of interim committees that legislative members are actively interested in problems of administration. Also because the Legislature sets general administrative policy by law and furnishes money for administrative operations, they have a direct reason for knowing what goes on in the various administrative branches of government.

For this reason you will recall that at a superintendents' meeting some months ago we discussed methods of keeping legislative members informed about the administration of the programs under our jurisdiction. We discussed methods of bringing to their attention the problems, as well as the successes, which we encounter.

I wish each institution superintendent would take it upon himself to devise methods of bringing legislative members into close contact with his institution. In doing so, I invite your consideration of the following cautions that occurred to me:

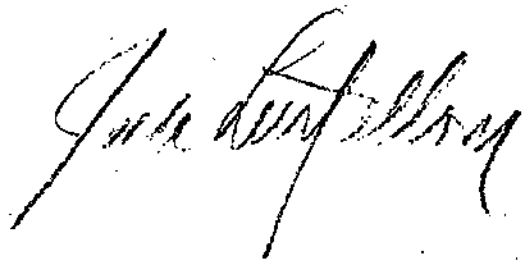
1. It is the duty of the executive branch of government to keep the legislative branch fully informed on both the positive and negative aspects of legislation and appropriations, but it is not proper for the executive branch to attempt high-pressuring the Legislature;
2. In all legislative contacts, the institution should represent itself as part of the total program rather than as an autonomous unit;
3. Internal disputes, such as those that occasionally crop up between departments or individuals within an institution, or between the institution and central office, are not proper discussion subjects in legislative contacts because the Legislature has the right to expect us to straighten out these "family" matters among ourselves. Similarly, controversial problems of policy or legislation on which there is not substantial agreement among institutions and central office should be avoided;
4. The contacts should be purposive and natural, not artificial or strained. It must be remembered that legislator's time and attention are limited and the legislator who takes time to come to your

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institution is entitled to see your administration exactly as it is, consisting as it does of both favorable and unfavorable items. There should be no hesitation to show the good work that is being done as well as the problems that exist;

5. Mental hospitals should confine their attention to legislative members within their own districts in order to avoid problems of overlapping, time and travel. In the case of the institutions that serve a state-wide function, other arrangements need to be made.

I would like to discuss this matter further with you at the time of our next institutional meeting in order to receive your comments and further suggestions.



JL:ml