

MINUTES

HOSPITAL SUPERINTENDENTS' MEETING
- Special Meeting -
June 9, 1959
Department of Public Welfare
St. Paul, Minnesota

Present: Messrs. Hursh, Lappegaard, Chapado; Drs. Cameron, Vail, Donald Peterson, Bradley, Hutchinson, Reitmann, Grimes, Williams, Patterson, Engberg; Messrs. Henderson, Harold Peterson, Miss Conklin. Absent: Drs. M. C. Petersen, Wadsworth, Adkins.

No formal agenda was prepared or adhered to. Dr. Cameron suggested that the purpose of the meeting was to allow the superintendents to express directly to Mr. Hursh sentiments which had been stated at the Ah-Gwah-Ching meeting of May 28, 1959.

Dr. Cameron suggests the following order of business as to items for discussion:

- 1) Current expense: budgetary outlook.
- 2) Salary and personnel complements: budgetary outlook.
- 3) Maintenance provisions: budgetary outlook.
- 4) Central Office-Institution relationships.

Hursh apologized for the recent news release and denied that he had made the statement attributed to him concerning relatives of staff physicians living at the institution.

Grimes pointed out that the figure of \$11,000--\$13,000 per year as "average" salary for physicians concerned (this had been mentioned as such in a press statement) was too high. (Note: Central median figure for state hospital physicians is \$10,000--\$10,999 range. Only one third are in \$11,000--\$13,000 range.)

Cameron stated that the problem of chief concern to program are ways and means of obtaining adequate budgets.

D. Peterson claimed that the legislature's data is "meaningless", that it takes a certain absolute minimum amount of money to run each institution; that there is a gap in the current expense account between what it will cost to run the hospital and what is scheduled to be appropriated.

The group then reviewed material prepared by Chapado. There was a discrepancy between the expected current expense deficits as estimated by central office and by the Superintendents. This appears to depend on the figure for maintenance receipts and the way in which these are calculated. (Note: It later appeared that the Chapado estimates included a return of the customary \$85 deduction from salaries which amount in the proposed bill will no longer be deducted.)

It became clear that agreement on a method of computation of expected deficits should be arrived at.

D. Peterson, as President of the Association of Medical Superintendents, reviewed steps in the formation of that organization and suggested that the Association would do what it could to bring the current expense problem to the attention of the Conference Committee.

Discussion ensued about problem of uniformity, the consensus of the medical group being that line-item fiscal uniformity from institution to institution is a spurious concept.

Hursh stated that the superintendents' requests had already been presented in the budget proposals, that the legislature preferred to deal with the Commissioner and not the superintendents, that the legislature "will not tolerate" this manner of presenting budget demands. Further, that Mr. Shovell had indicated that "there will be no further hearing", that no one has ever previously presumed to disturb the Conference Committee, that the chances for equity are reduced as the special session continues, and that it is not even certain that he (Hursh) will obtain an interview with the conferees. That it was "late in the day" for any such activity, that they "might" reopen the question of maintenance but nothing more.

Testimony of Ethel Heaberlin was not available, despite the fact that this had been requested from the Senate Finance Committee.

Cameron pointed out that Section 46 as written says nothing about discontinuation of food and laundry service.

Summary: (proposals of Cameron)

The line of approach should follow this order of priority.

- 1) Restoration of current expense appropriation:
 - a) (hopefully) in accordance with Governor's request;
 - b) (failing this) an appropriation in accord with actual expenditures, adjusted to the increased number of patients resulting from transfers out of Sandstone; with
 - c) a resolution of the discrepancy in the method of accounting maintenance returns.
- 2) Restoration of personnel complements and salary accounts:
 - a) (hopefully) in accord with Governor's request;
 - b) (failing this) with no cuts from current levels.
- 3) Maintenance policies:

For those in residence and on family maintenance; full quarters, restoration of \$85 deduction, plus \$1980 per year absolute increase. For those off grounds, the same compensation, plus \$150 per month quarters allowance.

For superintendents, an increase of \$4000 in salary in lieu of food and laundry.

Method of Procedure(Cameron)

- 1) Propose to Senator Child and Mr. Shovell that we would like a formal extended hearing at which superintendents are present, with press coverage at the discretion of the legislators. The presentation to avoid line-item and comparative analyses.
- 2) If no hearing is allowed, to submit a written report and simultaneously hold a press conference.

The suggestion was made that the Governor should be asked to support the Department of Public Welfare position. Hursh pointed out that this would "positively ensure an unfavorable reception."

Another special meeting will be held in a few days(subsequently arranged for 6-15-59) to crystallize the proposed presentation to the Conference Committee, with respect to both the text of any message which accompanies this as well as uniform and sound estimates of current expense deficits for institutions.