

60 - IWP-EJE
State Inst - Fairbault
August 5, 1960

Fairbault State School & Hospital

Dr. David J. Vail, Medical Director
Department of Public Welfare

Dr. E. J. Engberg, Superintendent

Institution Work Program

Harold Peterson sat near me at lunch at the Superintendents' Meeting last Friday following the discussion on institution work programs and raised the question whether this would not be a good subject for the next Inter-Institutional Meeting. I agreed with him that it would be and had an opportunity to mention this to Miss Coakley. She indicated that it would be a suitable item for consideration at the next or some future meeting of the group.

I believe we were the first institution to recommend the addition of a patient placement officer as a new position when our requests were reviewed with the Central Office and Department of Administration in the fall of 1948. We justified it on the basis that we desired a person not only to be responsible for assigning patient helpers to work areas where they were needed but primarily to be concerned about the welfare of such patients, to see that they received proper training, were rotated so they would secure the maximum of experience, that their working conditions were proper and hours of work within proper limits. Edwin Lehtinen, a member of our social service staff, became our first placement officer and served from 12-5-49 to 3-5-54 when he resigned to accept a similar position at the Porterville State Hospital, Porterville, California. He now is serving in a related capacity in Sonoma State Hospital, Sonoma, California. He with his family visited us a few days ago. Mr. Roy Welsandt succeeded Mr. Lehtinen so that this program has now been carried on under two competent supervisors and it would be interesting to compare our experience with that of the programs at Cambridge, Owatonna and Brainerd.

I agreed with the splendid presentation Dr. Behrendt gave at the meeting last Friday of her opinion of work programs. However, I believe these become more truly "work" programs in institutions for mentally retarded than for mentally ill and especially so in institutions such as this which does not admit educable school children unless having serious additional handicaps.

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