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65-APP-DJV
State Inst Gen

cc - Mr. Engberg
Nursing
S.S.

cc: Dr. Smith
Miss Ford
Social Service
Medical Records

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

TO: All Institutions
Attention: Medical Directors
Administrators
Nursing Services
Social Services

Feb. 17, 1965

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.

DJV:rcj