

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

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

February 17, 1965

Committee on Humane Practices

Mental Health Executive Council

DPW Cabinet

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

SUBJECT: Procedures on clothing

I have given further thought to the discussion at the December 18, 1964, Superintendents' meeting concerning clothing.

1. I am afraid this problem is beyond me.
2. Generally, I think we should aim for a system that includes marking but excludes the inventory of personal clothing. I am convinced that the inventory is of no value; and of course it is time-consuming.
3. I think we should try to increase the families' responsibility as much as possible. For example, could each family do the bulk of the marking for its member?
4. I encourage institutions to experiment, provided they report back their results to the group. I agreed that Fergus Falls could on a pilot basis stop the inventory altogether; if others want to also, there is no objection.
5. I would refer the matter to these two groups:
 - 5.1 Hospital Administrators' Study Group
Especially to examine administrative and technical aspects.
Have we explored sufficiently the use of tape, special inks (e.g., normally invisible, but fluoresce under ultraviolet light), etc.?
 - 5.2 Committee on Humane Practices
To examine the dignity aspects as regards marking of clothes, loss or damage of clothing, storage, family involvement, etc.
Somewhere along the line, the patient councils should be consulted.

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6. I will be advised by Dr. Bartman and proceed accordingly, if it appears that some special policies will have to be set up for the mental retardation institutions.
7. I hope we can have this problem resolved and a clear policy drawn up and in effect by June 30, 1965.

DJV:rcj