

71-OWB-DIV
State Trust Men

Harold Gillespie
cc D. Runkle

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
Medical Services Division

May 1971

TO: Minnesota State Hospitals
Attention: Medical Director
Administrator 2

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

I am attaching several copies of an Open Letter to Patients and Residents which will appear as my Editorial in the next issue of our MSD Newsletter.

I would appreciate it if you would please see to it that copies of this letter are made available to all patients/residents via Patient Councils, Unit or Ward meetings, inclusion in your hospital bulletin, posting, or any other method or combination of methods you may have for reaching your patient/resident population.

Thank you for your cooperation.

*Copies of attached letter made
& distributed to all Unit Dir. &
Dir. Heads, per Mr. S. Radon
(See [unclear] Conf. minutes dated
5/26/71)*

(9m)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
Medical Services Division

May, 1971

TO: Patients and Residents
Minnesota State Hospitals

My friends,

It has been several years since I last wrote an open letter such as this to you seeking your suggestions on ways to improve the conditions, programs and services in our State Hospitals.

At that time I received a number of very helpful and useful ideas -- some of which I believe have been successfully implemented. Unfortunately, it isn't always possible to do everything that should be done or that is requested. Some things are determined by forces beyond our control such as budgets, buildings and space, inadequate equipment, etc. However, there are always a number of things which can be done either by redirecting our efforts or changing our priorities, practices or procedures. Obviously, the first thing we must do is identify the problem -- or, to put it another way, to recognize the practice or procedure we want changed. In order to do this it is extremely important to hear directly from those of you who are the recipients of the services and programs which are intended to be of help to you. We need to be sure that we are, at least, aware of your concern, your criticism, your suggestions and your needs, as you see them. This information then can assist us in looking analytically at what we are doing and hopefully where appropriate and possible, to try to change those things which we can and should change.

For quite some time the subject of 'patients' rights' has been of great interest to me -- not only because it is of personal concern, but also because I see this area as a prime responsibility of the Medical Services Division Director's office. And so it seems most appropriate that I, as Medical Director, should solicit your suggestions, in our attempt to improve the quality of life and ensure patients' rights.

The kinds of things you may want to comment on could include such matters as use of medication and drugs, admission and discharge procedures, use of seclusion and restraint, involvement in decisions affecting you, opportunities for questions and answers regarding your program, staff attitudes, opportunity for choices related to decision making, your needs relating to programs and services. There are undoubtedly a variety of other suggestions which are of interest to you and which I would hope you would feel free to comment on.

I will be looking forward to hearing from you so that it will be possible for me to combine your concerns with regard to patients' rights along with those expressed by the Administrators and staff of our State hospitals.

Yours sincerely,

David J. Vail, M.D.