



NEWS

from

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Presidents of the Western State School and Hospital's Parents' Group and the Allegheny County Chapter, Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens have expressed anger at the most recent in a series of deaths at Western State School and Hospital. Paul Jenkins, of Pittsburgh, a 17 year old mentally retarded and physically handicapped resident, choked to death following his evening meal yesterday. Western State School and Hospital's Parents' Group President, Dr. Harry Goldberg, described this death as unnecessary. Dr. Goldberg stated, "Had the dietary procedure been followed as ordered, this tragic death would not have occurred. The doctor's orders called for Jenkins' food to be cut into pieces. According to the preliminary investigation, a large piece of uncut meat was found lodged in his throat."

Virginia Thornburgh, ACC-PARC President, and Dr. Goldberg had visited the institution during the evening meal prior to Jenkins' death and questioned WSSH authorities why the meat served to most of the residents had not been cut into bite-sized pieces by staff supervising the meal.

Mrs. Thornburgh stressed that a death like this was inevitable due to inappropriate mealtime procedures. These inadequacies were

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ADD 2

called to the attention of the WSSH authorities over six months ago by both groups.

The Parents' Group and ACC-PARC called for the Washington County Coroner, Farrell Jackson, to immediately begin an intensive investigation to determine if Jenkins death was caused by negligence.

"When will the deaths end?" Mrs. Thornburgh questioned "The Department of Public Welfare has failed, again, in its legal and moral responsibilities for the safety of the residents at Western State School and Hospital."

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