

[REDACTED]
January 4, 1974

Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Consider this personal correspondence from me to you as a fellow parent, and not as a member of the grievance committee at Western State School and Hospital.

After reading your letter of December 23, 1973 to Mr. Hiltner concerning the medical mismanagement of your son Mark at Western, I concluded that there is little if any likelihood of ongoing improvement in the care and treatment of your son at this institution, under the present circumstances. Regardless of how satisfactory to you the answers to your questions might be--as posed in your letter--you must be willing to take an extra bit of action in order to prevent recurrences of the tragic situation described in your letter.

I say this because I was forced to take independent action myself in order to ensure that my son, Eddie, received a higher level of medical, nutritional, and psychiatric attention in the past month. What I did was engage a psychiatrist from the "outside" as a private consultant on Eddie's care. This consultant is a psychiatrist in whom [REDACTED] and I have full trust, and with the permission of Mr. Hiltner (which I obtained after writing a letter similar to yours) this psychiatrist has met with the "team" responsible for Eddie's programs at Western. As a result I have already seen an increased degree of attention to my son's specific needs.

I would suggest therefore that you consider the following and hold it in your back pocket until such time as it might be needed--say at a staffing or as a result of direct confrontation with those individuals at Western who have obviously treated your son, Mark, with less than human dignity. Retain, at your own expense, a private outside physician to consult on a monthly basis with the staff at Western who are concerned with the care of your son. Clear this with Mr. Hiltner first of course after you have received an answer to your letter. In this way you will be apprised of your son's medication and ongoing medical history.

As the parents of this boy, you and [REDACTED] have this right. Wait until the proper moment and then demand it. Your son's being institutionalized does not make him less of a son to you, nor does it take away any rights you have regarding his well being.

I say again hold this in your back pocket until it is decided by yourself and your wife that indeed this is the only viable alternative to the level of care he is getting now. I can only say that in the past month that my own private "consultant" has been involved there has been a measurable difference in the attention given to my own son's well being. As I said this is personal correspondence. I

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and sharing it only with Jack McLain and Harry Goldberg.
Needless to say, you have my own support and best wishes
for a speedy resolution of your particular problem.

Sincerely,



DAT:sml

cc: J. McLain

H. Goldberg ✓