

ALLEGHENY COUNTY CHAPTER  
Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children

Minutes

Meeting with Dr. James McClelland  
Polk State School and Hospital

April 2, 1973

Right to Education

Was not discussed.

Implementation of Federal Medical Standards

McClelland said that he had three doctors to give medical examinations to 3,000 patients. To examine this number when there was little expectation of "sorting them out" to meet standards, was an exercise of futility.

Building Renovation

This relates to the above. McClelland stated that the last GSA renovation resulted in fewer sanitary facilities than those that previously existed. Further, that the screening of showers and toilets made it "impossible" for attendants to get in and assist their severely handicapped patient. McClelland stated that he was not enthusiastic about breaking existing wards into sleeping rooms since the existing overcrowding made supervision difficult enough. In addition, the cost efficiency factor for the renovation could be achieved better by "building a new facility."

Transfer of 1,000 Patients

McClelland viewed with enthusiasm the expectation of reducing his patient load by 1/3. Somerset State School and Hospital, in his opinion, was an excellent possibility. If the people were to be selected by geography (i.e., one county) or homogeneously from the Southwest region would have to be determined.

McClelland stated that they should be taken out of Polk in 1/2 dozens or dozens.

Note - C. A. Peters disagreed. Felt they should be moved in large groups. Preferably with the Somerset State School and Hospital attendants spending a week or two with them at Polk prior to the move.

Transitional Services

McClelland stated that approximately 15 ex-Polk residents have returned from Transitional Services; some more than once.

Roughly 1/2 have been returned because they required hospitalization for medical problems as a result of accidents, etc. One has been returned because she became psychotic. This condition existed while she was at Polk State School and Hospital.



The remaining 7 or 8 returned "because they got bored", "because there was no work", "because there was nothing to do..."

McClelland stated that he had tried to impress on Transitional Services that the first 100 out of Polk were "choice candidates" for dispersal. He also stated that Polk made clear to Transitional Services that the second 100 and the balance thereafter would require much closer supervision and a longer period before they can move to apartments. According to McClelland, he suggested to Royer that he use his maximum supervision facilities for these mentally retarded as opposed to putting them in unsupervised or minimum supervision situations.

#### Conclusion

If the 1,000 people can be moved out of Polk, there will be a ratio of almost one staff to each patient. Sorting out for Federal medical standards, individual programming, right to education and normalization may then be obtained.

Of equal importance, McClelland's best defense (i.e., overcrowding) will be removed.