

STATE SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS AND INTERIM CARE COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting, Tuesday, November 28, 1972

Present: Virginia Thornburgh, Chairman, Barbara Sistik, Associate Chairman, Bill Kennedy, Ann Shord, Grace Crull, Sara Sattler, Dorothy O'Sullivan, Loretta Ryan, Mary Dorfman, Lou Reid, Elizabeth Flaherty, Sally Hollyfield, Joan Belsterling

Not Present: Raymond Wokutch, Gerry Radke, Jean Isherwood, Alice Goldberg, Albert Walters.

VISITS TO RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Members of the committee have visited fifteen facilities housing Allegheny County children or adults. Additional visits to Children's Rehabilitation Center in Butler and Erie Infants' Home occurred Wednesday, November 29th. The visits are in line with the mandate given to the committee to visit every facility where Allegheny County citizens reside.

Members of the committee individually reported on their visits to these facilities. Concerns were raised about the quality of care in many of the facilities. Another concern was raised about the effectiveness of the Department of Public Welfare Regional Onsite investigating Teams.

WESTERN STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL - UNDERSTAFFING

Several members of the committee reported on the October 3rd visit to WSSH. A special concern was expressed about swarming flies on the Spruce Lodge Unit #1.

At the July Board of Directors meeting, Mr. Kennedy proposed the motion, which carried, requesting that: (a) WSSH Superintendent Bob Hiltner take appropriate actions assuring that abusive incidents would not reoccur; (b) Hiltner reply with a reorganization and reform plan by the September Board Meeting and (c) if Mr. Hiltner's response was not satisfactory, allowing the Chapter to seek legal counsel.

Bob Hiltner's response in September was: (a) that he was getting his feet wet on reorganizing WSSH staff and procedures and (b) that the State was being forced to hire 200 additional staff for WSSH or lose millions of dollars of federal nursing home funds. The Board accepted Bob Hiltner's response as good faith and delayed further action.

200 additional child care staff are required to meet the federal skilled nursing home standards; 169 child care staff were required to meet the standards of the Joint Commission on the Accreditation Standards of Hospitals; 39 additional child care staff are required to meet the most recent DPW standards. As of last Monday, Mr. Hiltner had no guarantee of even one additional staff person.

Motion: The Chairman of this committee and/or ACC-PARC President shall directly communicate with the Governor and Secretary of Public Welfare our grave concern about the understaffing at WSSH. Particularly because of the Governor's publicized displeasure during his October visit to WSSH, he should be urged to take immediate action. The Governor should be urged to seek an emergency appropriation, if needed. Motion made by Mrs. Shord, seconded by Mrs. Crull. Unanimously carried.

DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTS

The complete and lengthy report of each visit to a facility are available at the office or at any committee meetings. A condensed version of all reports will be prepared by staff and distributed to the members of the committee.

COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

Mrs. Thornburgh and Mr. Nelkin presented to the committee a position paper suggesting a future direction and listing 14 objectives of the committee. Committee members are invited to review the four pages of objectives and come up with additions or deletions. If you have any suggestions, please call Ginny Thornburgh or Bob Nelkin.

Mr. Kennedy stated that for each objective there are two forces at work. He suggested that the committee understand the consequences, investment of time and money, and intended results of each objective. It is the committee's task to detail these and recommend action to the Board of Directors and officers.

Mrs. Thornburgh indicated that two committees would be formed immediately. A sub-committee on medication will be chaired by Elizabeth Flaherty. A sub-committee on human rights will be formed soon. A chairman for this committee is yet to be selected.

MEDICATION COMMITTEE

Elizabeth Flaherty, Chairman, will form the committee and objectives immediately. The committee will include S.S.H. & I.C. Committee members, physicians and interested citizens.

The medication committee is charged with the responsibility of (1) educating our inspection teams about medication; (2) making recommendations for reform of present medication procedures in private facilities and State schools and hospitals. Immediate concerns include: present regulations; release forms for medical treatment; frequent drugs used and purposes; procedure for prescribing drugs; medication reviews; procedures for recording drugs.

HOUSE-SENATE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE: RIDGE VIEW

The life of the House-Senate Investigating Committee formed after Louis Novak's death will end this week. The committee has not yet interrogated public officials involved in political favors influencing Ridge View Licensing.

Motion: The Chairman of this committee shall immediately request the House of Representatives and Senate leadership to pass a resolution continuing the life of the House-Senate Investigating Committee regarding Louis Novak and Ridge View Center. Motion made by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mrs. Sattler. Unanimously carried.

STILLMEADOW SCHOOL

Dr. Mulgrave and Bob Nelkin met with Ed Goldman, Deputy Secretary for Mental Retardation, and suggested a review of the care at Stillmeadow School. Dr. Stanley Schneider, of Goldman's office, reported back today that (a) Secretary Wohlgenuth had made a surprise visit to Stillmeadow. Although she found no specific abuse, she ordered DPW child care workers to be placed at Stillmeadow around the clock; (b) that the DPW Northeast Regional Office feels this facility should be kept open and improved; (c) Dr. Schneider was not aware of any DPW investigation of alleged excessive punishment or abusive treatment at Stillmeadow.

STILLMEADOW SCHOOL (CONTINUED)

The ACC-PARC inspection team received brief reports of prolonged confinement in a quiet room (12 to 16 hours) and physical beatings by some of the operators "favorite residents."

Motion: That ACC-PARC staff and Board members shall interview Allegheny County residents at Stillmeadow concerning the treatment they have received there. These interviews should be done in conjunction with the State Association and the Northeast Region Vice President, Ruth Levy. The committee shall formally register its concern about the treatment being received at Stillmeadow. Motion made by Miss Flaherty, seconded by Mrs. Shord. Unanimously carried.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mrs. Crull suggested a training program for inspection team members.

Mrs. Gribben sought direction from the committee on how to expend the \$1,000.00 surplus of the Polk Bus Fund.

The PARC membership meeting will be held Tuesday, December 12, 1972, at 8 o'clock P.M. at the downtown YWCA. The meeting is entitled, "All you Would Ever Want to Know About Residential Services for the Mentally Retarded but Were Afraid to Ask."

Mrs. Sattler expressed concern that severely retarded and severely handicapped citizens will not be included in the plans for group homes.

Mr. Kennedy wondered why PARC is not moving in the residential services field.

Mrs. Thornburgh will be attending a State-PARC Meeting on the Right to Treatment.

Mr. Nelkin asked our investigating team to look for specifics for the Right to Treatment Suit, including names, rights being denied and telephone number of parents.

Mrs. Crull asked us to put more pressure on BSU's to monitor children in the facilities.

Mr. Kennedy urged the committee to take immediate action to bring Allegheny County children back to this region. The committee will make monthly visits to both Polk and Western State School and Hospitals on a surprise basis.