

Polk

October 3, 1973

Mr. Joseph Columbatto, Superintendent
Polk State School and Hospital
Box 94
Polk, Pa. 16342

Dear Mr. Columbatto:

From a parent of a Polk resident this Association has received the following allegations:

1. Placements are now made in the hospital unit regardless of the degree of the handicap. This is caused by the combining of 2 hospital units.
2. Eighteen nurses have been dismissed. This report is contrary to your progress statements stating better nursing coverage.
3. Professionals are not included in the planning process for changes at Polk.
4. Continued inadequate staffing in Gardenside Building. The report stated that there were only 2 Practical Nurses and an aide I.
5. Continued inadequate staffing in Meadowside Building. The report states that there are only 2 attendants.
6. Absenteeism has been unusually great in Gardenside and Meadowside Buildings. One half of the staff has not shown up regularly.
7. Dental care is worsening. Daily hygiene is not consistently done.

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8. D.P.W. is purposely misleading the public about Polk. This effort is described as window dressing including both P.R. releases and tours.
9. Parents are fearful about speaking up. They are afraid their sons or daughters will be transferred to other institutions.
10. Visiting hours are restricted. Parents must notify Polk when they are going to visit.
11. No alternatives are created to the infamous cage. Forty individuals have been injured in the last 2 weeks; either clawed, kicked or bitten.
12. D.P.W. will deny these injuries; but there were 2 ambulances at Polk one day last week.
13. D.P.W. engaged in deception about Cottage no. 1 improvements. Those persons who resided in no. 1 (jail) are now disbursed throughout Polk. Other persons have been placed in no. 1 making it seem that there was never a need for bars and scrubbers.

Evidently at least some staff and parents believe the care at Polk is falling. Is your evaluation of the situation similar? I'd appreciate a speedy reply to that general statement and the 13 allegations brought to our attention.

Sincerely,

Robert Nelkin, Director
Community and Chapter Affairs

cc: C. A. Peters
Norman Mulgrave
Virginia Thornburgh
Patricia Clapp

RN/ps