

ALLEGHENY COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL RETARDATION PROGRAM

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219 / 355-4456

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS / Leonard C. Staisey, Chairman / Thomas J. Foerster / William R. Hunt, M.D.

ADMINISTRATOR / George C. Lowe, Jr. / Chairman of the Board / Charles H. Bisdee

January 22, 1975

Mr. Charles A. Peters, Commissioner  
Office of Mental Retardation  
Western Region  
Pittsburgh State Office Building  
300 Liberty Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222

Dear Mr. Peters:

Thank you for responding to our request for information about the status of the dollars required to continue day program services for Polk residents currently housed at Allegheny Valley Senior School.

You must be aware that your message is quite troublesome to us. As I understood our arrangement, Department of Public Welfare/Office of Mental Retardation was to move \$50.00 per week per resident from institutional funds to the Allegheny County Program in order to permit us the resources needed to arrange for day program. The news that these dollars will not be forthcoming creates many problems. The long range problem is one of trust. We agreed to act as a fiduciary in the provision of these services because we see the need to reinforce the principle that dollars follow people, and because we had (and have) a sincere desire to do those things we can to improve the grossly inadequate conditions at Polk State School and Hospital. If those who are responsible for providing these dollars are now beginning to waffle on the deal, it can only be that they don't recognize the value of the type of arrangement we have worked out. Our intention was to assist in the Polk Dispersal Project. As a first principle, it needs to be clearly understood that the Polk residents at Allegheny Valley School are the complete fiscal responsibility of the Polk budget. There can be no misunderstanding about this!

You know that the Allegheny County Association for Retarded Citizens went to great pains to relocate an entire program in order to serve these Polk residents. They did this with the clear understanding, mutually arrived at, that the dollars needed to provide this service would continue to flow.

The Allegheny County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program does not have the dollars to continue this program in the absence of our previously agreed upon fiduciary arrangement. When these dollars dry up, the program dries up. This action will represent a breach of faith with this office and with PARC. It will work an undo hardship on PARC and in all probability, be disastrous for Polk residents at Allegheny Valley School. The problem takes



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on an absurd context when one considers that it will probably cost the Polk budget more to staff day program activities at Allegheny Valley School than the current program costs, without the benefit of community exposure.

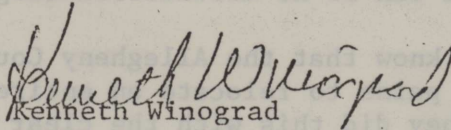
A corollary issue is that of day program for the Marcy population. I understand that your internal approval process is such that it took from September 1974 through December 13, 1974 to get approval to move the dollars required to mount this program. You understand that there was no way we could move on substantive issues with any service provider until the dollars were identified. Hence, your desired start-up date of January 1, 1975 became unobtainable. As you know, considerable negotiation is required to start a service. The PARC experience around Polk/Allegheny Valley School attests to this. With the news that the State is apparently not living up to the terms of our previous agreement, continued effort in establishing the Marcy day program becomes even more problematic. Given the current track record around this type of collaborative program, we now need to question the morality of encouraging another provider to mount a program of some magnitude in the face of disappearing dollars.

I believe we have demonstrated our interest in the deinstitutionalization goals of the Office of Mental Retardation. We cannot be a party to a process that returns people to programless communities. We will not be a party to a replication of the California and New York experiences. We believe that people do not need to wander off into oblivion if proper programmatic arrangements can be made. This human disaster can be prevented only through the provision of resources and the development of new ways of doing business. The beauty of the Polk Dispersal Plan was that it recognized and addressed both of these needs. It pains me to see this concept die.

Without some very strong assurances from your office, we cannot proceed with Marcy day programming. In the absence of the re-instatement of the Polk/Allegheny Valley School Day Program dollars, I suggest you begin to plan now for program for this population.

Sincerely,

ALLEGHENY COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH  
AND MENTAL RETARDATION PROGRAM

  
Kenneth Winograd  
Associate Administrator for  
Planning and Evaluation

cc Ronald Archer  
Shirley Dumpman  
Dorothy Hockycko  
William R. Trexler

dk