



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

HARRISBURG

NEWS

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Newsroom

Secretary of Public Welfare Helene Wohlgemuth announced a series of actions designed to improve the quality of care and rehabilitation at Polk State School and Hospital. Mrs. Wohlgemuth in a letter to the parents of children at the institution said: "In the midst of all the controversy, my primary concern continues to be the well-being of your child at Polk."

In moves which will translate that concern into action, the Secretary announced several steps she has taken. First, a group of seven nationally known experts in modern programming for the mentally retarded are visiting Polk today. The experts will are viewing programs at the facility and provide observations and an evaluation based on their own experiences.

Mrs. Wohlgemuth said: "I am pleased we could call on the advice of people such as Alan Menefee, Director of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation, Phillip Roos, Executive Director of the National Association for Retarded Children and others to provide help in improving programs at Polk."

The seven member team in addition to Roos and Menefee includes:

Dr. Marvin Kivitz
Elwyn Institute

Mr. Albert Meuli
National Association of Superintendents of Public Residences Facilities
for the Mentally Retarded

Mr. Gene Patterson
National Association for Retarded Children, Residential Committee

Dr. George Soloyanis
American Association on Mental Deficiency

Dr. Luke Watson, Jr.
Columbus State Institute

(more)

"I have asked each of these experts to provide me with their evaluation and advice," Mrs. Wohlgemuth said.

In a second action the Secretary also announced that a team representing several professional disciplines was spending the week at Polk working with staff to assess program needs and develop recommendations for immediate improvement in conditions.

Under the direction of Ford Thompson, Jr., Special Assistant to the Secretary, the team consists of a pediatrician from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, an expert in physical therapy, and veteran professionals in nursing, social work, psychology, patient activities and education.

Mrs. Wohlgemuth said: "I expect both of these actions to provide us with recommendations and specific evaluations for change and improvement at Polk."

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