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County of Allegheny

PITTSBURGH, PA. 15219

File
M/H/K

CHARLES A. PETERS
ADMINISTRATOR

May 12, 1977

Mr. Peter P. Polloni
Deputy Secretary
Office of Mental Retardation
Department of Public Welfare
Health and Welfare Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Polk Dispersal Project

Dear Mr. Polloni:

The Allegheny County Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Drug and Alcohol Program supports the goal of better services for individuals who are presently residents at Polk Center and, thus, supports in principle the recently established goal of decreasing the census at Polk Center by approximately 584 individuals. Although most of the references to this current focus on dispersing an additional 584 individuals has been to increase Polk Center's potential to earn M.A. funding, we know you are committed to better services for these individuals and that that remains the primary goal.

As this office works to accomplish these goals for Allegheny County residents at Polk Center, we will also be assessing and planning for the needs of present community residents. The County Administrator clearly has a responsibility to integrate these demands for services for both philosophical and pragmatic reasons. If there were not integration of these clients in services, we would run the risk of developing mini institutions in Allegheny County. We must also respond to the demands for services for community residents because of their needs, and these are the constituents who will actively approach the elected officials at both the County and State level. If "the community" feels that all the services are being diverted toward institutional residents so the state can earn additional funding through M.A., and do not see services being developed to meet the needs of community residents, the support for our program at a number of levels will diminish. Therefore, in conjunction with our planning for continuation of the dispersal effort, the County Office will be working with the catchment areas to determine the needs (CLA, day program, other support services) of community residents. Our plan for the dispersal will include provisions for these community services as well as the need of Polk Center residents. At present, our estimate is that implementation of the plan that will be developed will require at least 18 months, and could be completed no earlier than December, 1978. We have included a plan for Polk Center dispersal both in the annual plan and as an attachment to this letter.

MENTAL HEALTH/MENTAL RETARDATION/DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAM
901 Allegheny Building / 429 Forbes Avenue / Pittsburgh, PA 15219 / 355-4456

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However, an adequate needs assessment needs to be accomplished so that we might better plan for the types and range of services that will be needed. The Allegheny County Base Service Unit monitors will again be reviewing the residents at Polk Center and current satellite sites this spring. This process has already started. Once their data has been collected, it will be used to make any modification necessary to the program and CLA needs already specified.

The discussions to date have focused on the development of community living arrangement programs for present Polk Center residents. At this time, it is my judgment that our capacity to serve approximately 150 individuals requires that residential services in addition to CLA need to be developed. There are several reasons for this. First, the Allegheny County MH/MR/D&A system has undergone significant expansion in the area of community living arrangements this past fiscal year due to the recent dispersal programs at Marcy Habilitation Center and Western Center. This has imposed a significant demand on the service system, and many current providers are approaching their maximum capacity. This increase also puts demands on our developmental centers, therapeutic activity centers, and workshop programs. Further, it places demands on the case management units and outpatient services at the Base Service Units.

The second point is that at present, we wish to maintain a 50/50 ratio in CLA programs. We feel this is necessary for programmatic reasons as well as our desire to serve both community and Polk Center residents. With this consideration in mind, we have modified the CLA Plan for FY 77-78. We have made a small increase in the number of programs and the capacity which we are proposing to serve. It is important to note that we do not feel the "slots" are interchangeable. That is to say, the plan was developed based upon community and institutional resident needs and our estimates of the potential providers and their capacity for FY 77-78. Thus, we feel each of the programs are needed. We do not believe that one program can be exchanged for the other. If your office were to establish a priority that adult programs are more needed than children's programs, we do not necessarily think we can simply develop two additional adult programs in place of the two children's programs we are requesting. Also, in determining the number of "slots" for Polk Center residents, we are committed to serving residents from Polk and/or its satellites within each CLA program at a 50/50 ratio. Thus, if we are unable to develop a particular program, such as a DMU, the number of "Polk slots" in the CLA plan for FY 77-78 would be decreased accordingly.

Given these considerations, we think there is need to explore alternatives such as creating or utilizing Intermediate Care Facilities that could meet the individuals' needs. We have begun to explore some possibilities and will continue to do so.

Another concern of ours is the geriatric population identified by the Polk Center Social Service Department. Our first concern relates to the advisability of attempting significant transfers of a geriatric population. These individuals are the most likely, as a group, to be effected negatively by significant change in their living situation. Certainly, our judgment would be that in many instances the "quality of

life" that can be provided them in a different environment would be significantly better. However, we doubt that the majority of these individuals share that judgment with us, and we are sincerely concerned about the negative effect on them. There is also a significant problem in Allegheny County at the present time regarding residential services for individuals over age 65. Kane Hospital is having critical problems and this places increased pressure on the service system in Allegheny County for individuals in this category. Thus, we feel there is a need for much more exhaustive review of these individuals, their needs, and our capacity to serve them. We look forward to discussing this issue with you.

For any CLA programs that are developed for Polk Center residents, we anticipate that more intensive levels of service will be required. This obviously will be reflected in the costs for CLA programs. In regard to day program and support services for this project, a figure of \$12.00 per day has been used in the past to provide for such services. I doubt this figure will be adequate in the future. This is particularly true since the Polk Center residents will probably require more intense services over a longer period of time. Thus, our budget for day program includes provisions for:

- "Up front" dollars for developmental centers and TAC's
- Increased administrative costs, both at the County Office and service provider level for the development of new programs
- Costs of case management services
- Purchase of transportation services
- Insurance - liability and malpractice
- Increased physician services

We have also been informed by the Allegheny County Commissioners that they will not be able to continue to provide the 10% match for day programs for institutional residents. Thus, DPW must provide 100% of the budget necessary for the support services for Polk Center residents.

As we indicated earlier, it has been our impression that the discussions to date have focused on the development of CLA program for Polk Center residents. We feel the planning for the continued dispersal of Allegheny County residents from Polk Center should include residents of the present dispersal sites (Marcy Habilitation Center, Highland Center, Robinson Developmental Center, Allegheny Valley School Cottage). We would like to work closely with the social service staff at Polk in identifying residents who might now utilize these sites in Allegheny County opened by movement into CLA's. These people will then be considered for CLA programs in FY 78-79 and later. This assists Polk Center in decreasing their census to meet M.A. standards, does not over-tax our communities, provides better services for the residents, allows them to be closer to their families, and facilitates future predischarge planning. We have concerns that movement from Polk Center directly to the community is not appropriate for most

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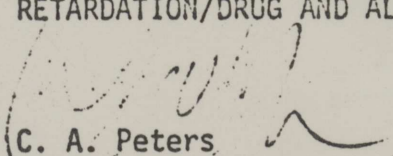
Polk Center residents. Given the intensive level of service necessary for present Polk Center residents and the constraints on our system's ability to develop this level of service in a brief time span, we are interested in discussing both the utilization of present dispersal sites and the development of additional resources to accomplish our mutual goals. There will be a need to recruit, encourage, and screen new providers to develop community living arrangements. There will also be a need for us to explore the establishment of additional intermediate care facilities and possibly private licensed facilities in Allegheny County. Such development will take significant lead time and funds for start-up costs. These are issues we need to discuss with you and to explore the possibility of the utilization of CLA funds for start-up costs for such programs.

Two last points; first, we feel it is primarily Polk Center's responsibility to provide the parents and residents with an understanding of this dispersal project and to obtain their agreement in writing to any transfers. Second, we will want assurances that state-operated facilities will be available for three years as "back-up" when needed for any residents who are transferred to a community living arrangement program.

In closing, we support you in this effort and sincerely want to work closely with you in developing a plan that will help us accomplish this. This requires a close working relationship between us, and I and my staff are prepared to work with you to accomplish these mutual goals. Can we get together with you to work through the issues raised here?

Sincerely,

ALLEGHENY COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH/MENTAL
RETARDATION/DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAM


C. A. Peters
Administrator

Enclosures

cc: Anna Belle Calloway
Larry Jenkins
Mel Knowlton
John Ligato
W. R. Trexler