

SPEECH BY
THE HONORABLE FRANK S. BEAL
SECRETARY OF PUBLIC WELFARE
AT THE
MERCER COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR THE RETARDED, INC.
ANNUAL DINNER
SHERATON INN
WEST MIDDLESEX, PENNSYLVANIA
MAY 20, 1976

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MERCER COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CITIZENS.

IT IS ALWAYS A PLEASANT AND SOMEWHAT NOSTALGIC EXPERIENCE FOR ME TO VISIT THE WESTERN PART OF OUR STATE. I SPENT MANY HAPPY AND REWARDING YEARS IN THIS AREA, AND I AM PROUD OF THE PROGRESS THAT IS BEING MADE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR RETARDED PEOPLE HERE.

IT IS ALSO A PRIVILEGE TO FOLLOW GOVERNOR SHAPP WHO ADDRESSED YOUR ORGANIZATION LAST YEAR. THE GOVERNOR HAS ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS BEST WISHES AND HIS CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO THE EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS TO ENABLE MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS TO LIVE AS NORMALLY AS POSSIBLE WITHIN OUR COMMUNITIES.

IN THE ALMOST QUARTER-CENTURY SINCE THE FOUNDING OF YOUR ASSOCIATION, YOU HAVE PROVED HOW MUCH CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY CONCERNED AND DEDICATED PEOPLE IN ESTABLISHING AND EXPANDING SERVICES.

MORE THAN 300 PERSONS ARE ACTIVELY BEING SERVED HERE IN MERCER COUNTY PROGRAMS -- AND MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THEM ARE IN REHABILITATIVE PROGRAMS WHICH WILL HELP THEM TO LIVE IN A MORE NORMAL, SATISFYING AND PRODUCTIVE WAY.

THROUGH YOUR COUNSELING, EVALUATION, JOB TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT PROGRAMS, YOU ARE MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR HUNDREDS OF HANDICAPPED PEOPLE TO PROVE THAT DISABILITY IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH INABILITY.

YOUR LEADERSHIP IN PROVIDING COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND, IN FACT, THE FIRST APARTMENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN THE STATE, SHOULD BE AN INSPIRATION FOR ALL COUNTIES THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH.

FOUR YEARS AGO, WE DID NOT TALK ABOUT COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED BECAUSE, WITH RARE EXCEPTION, THEY DID NOT EXIST.

TODAY THROUGHOUT THE STATE WE ARE PROVIDING RESIDENTIAL LIVING FOR MORE THAN 2,000 RETARDED PERSONS WHO HAVE COME FROM OUR STATE INSTITUTIONS OR WHO HAVE BEEN DIVERTED FROM THOSE INSTITUTIONS. HERE, IN THE WESTERN REGION, OF WHICH MERCER COUNTY IS AN IMPORTANT PART, MORE THAN 500 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LEAVE INSTITUTIONS AND LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY. THIS REPRESENTS ROUGHLY 50 PERCENT OF THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ENTIRE STATE.

MERCER COUNTY'S FUNDING ALLOCATION TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY LIVING

ARRANGEMENTS PROGRAMS HAS GROWN TO AN ANNUAL TOTAL OF \$197,000.

COMPARED TO THE TOTAL COUNTY ALLOCATION OF \$587,000; THIS DEMONSTRATES THE COUNTY'S COMMITMENT TO RETURNING PEOPLE TO THE COMMUNITY.

THREE YEARS AGO, WE HAD NO PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR A FAMILY WITH A RETARDED MEMBER TO ENABLE IT TO KEEP THAT MEMBER AT HOME AND OUT OF AN INSTITUTION. TODAY, MORE THAN 20,000 FAMILIES ACROSS THE STATE ARE RECEIVING SERVICES UNDER THE FAMILY RESOURCE SERVICES PROGRAM-- SERVICES MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR THOUSANDS OF RETARDED CITIZENS TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES.

IN 1969, WE HAD ONLY THE MOST LIMITED COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES FOR THE MENTALLY ILL AND THE MENTALLY RETARDED. IN 1976, OUR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS WILL SERVE MORE THAN 180,000 PENNSYLVANIANS.

AS WE ARE ALL AWARE, THE COSTS OF INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS ARE IN AN UPWARD SPIRAL, WITH NO RELIEF IN SIGHT. THESE PROGRAMS SERVE FEWER PEOPLE EACH YEAR, WHILE COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS SERVE TEN TIMES AS MANY PEOPLE. OUR ABILITY TO ADEQUATELY FINANCE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS HAS BEEN HAMPERED BY THE INCREASING INSTITUTIONAL COSTS, AND IT IS OUR INTENT TO TURN THIS SITUATION AROUND.

FROM FISCAL 1975 TO FISCAL 1976, STATEWIDE FUNDING FOR MENTAL

RETARDATION PROGRAMS INCREASED 14 PERCENT. THE ESTIMATED OVERALL INCREASE FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR WILL BE APPROXIMATELY 12 PERCENT. THE FUNDING FOR INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS IS EXPECTED TO DROP WHILE THE PERCENTAGE INCREASE FOR THE TOTAL COMMUNITY PROGRAM IS EXPECTED TO DOUBLE.

IN ADDITION, OUR DIRECTION SHALL BE TO SEEK THE COMPREHENSIVE STATE FUNDING NECESSARY TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS FOR OUR MENTALLY RETARDED CITIZENS. TO INSURE THAT THESE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS ARE EFFECTIVE, WE MUST ACHIEVE ACCOUNTABILITY IN THREE AREAS: INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT, PROGRAMMATIC, AND FISCAL.

THROUGH THE PASS (PROGRAM ANALYSIS OF SERVICE SYSTEMS), PROJECT MAIN (MOBILIZING ATTAINMENT OF INDIVIDUAL NEED), AND THE COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FISCAL AUDIT FORMAT, THE DEPARTMENT'S COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS PROGRAM HAS TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN ITS HIGH DEGREE OF CREDIBILITY WITH THE COMMUNITY.

FURTHERMORE, DURING THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR IT IS OUR INTENTION TO DEVELOP ADDITIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS HOUSE PARENTS AND RESIDENCE MANAGERS. IN FACT, PILOT PROGRAMS ARE NOW BEING DEVELOPED WITH THE HELP OF A NUMBER OF PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

IN THE INITIAL PHASE, COMMON PROBLEMS IN HOME MANAGEMENT WILL BE FACED AND SOLUTIONS FOUND. HOMEMAKERS AND MANAGERS OF GROUP HOMES WILL BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN THEIR SKILLS IN PLANNING FUNCTIONAL HOME MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMY OF OPERATION. THROUGH THESE TRAINING PROGRAMS, WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO EXPAND THE NUMBER OF PERSONS PROVIDING SUCH SERVICES AND TO INCREASE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL OF THOSE ALREADY IN THE PROGRAM.

AN ESSENTIAL PART OF CARE AND TREATMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IS THE EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF HEALTH PROBLEMS AND MORE EMPHASIS ON PREVENTIVE PROGRAMS. THIS HAS BEEN A DIRE NEED FOR THE THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN WHO LIVE IN FAMILIES WITH INCOMES BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL.

THROUGH THE EARLY PERIODIC SCREENING, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT PROGRAM, CHILDREN FROM POOR AND LOW-INCOME FAMILIES ARE NOW ABLE TO RECEIVE HEALTH EXAMINATIONS SO THAT DISABILITIES CAN BE DETECTED AND TREATED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

MORE THAN 158,000 CHILDREN HAVE BEEN SCREENED SINCE THE PROGRAM BEGAN IN JANUARY 1974.

OF THAT NUMBER, MORE THAN 77,000 -- ALMOST HALF -- WERE REFERRED FOR FURTHER DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.

THIS PREVENTIVE PROGRAM IS A SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD IN PREVENTING SERIOUS DISABILITY AND IN REDUCING THE SEVERITY OF DISABILITIES WHICH CANNOT BE PREVENTED.

YOU SEE THE RESULTS OF INADEQUATE HEALTH CARE EVERY DAY -- RETARDATION CAUSED BY POOR NUTRITION OF EXPECTANT MOTHERS -- DISABILITY CAUSED BY LEAD PAINT POISONING OF CHILDREN LIVING IN ANTIQUATED INADEQUATE HOUSING.

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN INADEQUATE INCOME AND POOR HEALTH CANNOT BE DENIED.

I AM PROUD OF THE FACT THAT WE IN PENNSYLVANIA HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN OUR POLICY OF PROVIDING ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS SO THAT THEY CAN BE ASSURED A NUTRITIOUS DIET. FOR THOSE PERSONS WHO MEASURE BENEFITS ONLY IN ECONOMIC TERMS, IT IS MUCH LESS EXPENSIVE TO PROVIDE THESE ADDITIONAL FUNDS THAN TO CARE FOR A MENTALLY RETARDED PERSON FOR A LIFETIME.

IN HUMAN TERMS, HOW DOES ONE MEASURE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A CHILD TO BE BORN, GROW AND DEVELOP AS A NORMAL HUMAN BEING?

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ADEQUATE DIET WAS ALSO RECOGNIZED BY CONGRESS WHEN THEY OVERRODE THE PRESIDENT'S VETO OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH AND CHILD NUTRITION ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1975. THIS LEGISLATION PROVIDES FOR FOOD SERVICE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, INCLUDING THE MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO MENTION TWO OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS TAKEN BY CONGRESS DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS:

--THE PASSAGE OF THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED ASSISTANCE AND BILL OF RIGHTS ACT WHICH AUTHORIZE FUNDS FOR CONSTRUCTION, PERSONAL ADVOCACY AND SERVICE DELIVERY.

--AND THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED.

WHILE CITING THESE EXAMPLES OF MAJOR PROGRESS IN EXPANDING AND IMPROVING OUR HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS TO PREVENT AND TO PROVIDE CARE AND TREATMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, I DON'T WANT TO GIVE YOU THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS. YOU AND I BOTH ARE AWARE THAT THERE ARE FORCES AND ATTITUDES AT WORK TO IMPEDE PROGRESS AND EVEN TO TURN BACK THE CLOCK.

IT IS DISCOURAGING TO SEE PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL CHANGES IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM WHICH WOULD DENY PARTICIPATION TO MILLIONS OF THE WORKING POOR AND WHICH WOULD REDUCE THE ALREADY SUBSTANDARD DIETARY BASIS OF THE PROGRAM.

AFTER FIVE YEARS OF ASSOCIATION WITH THE WELFARE SYSTEM, I'M STILL ASTONISHED AT THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL AND PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, WHERE 98 PERCENT OF THE RHETORIC ZEROES IN ON THE SMALL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ABUSE THE PROGRAM AND ALMOST NO INTEREST IS SHOWN IN DEVELOPING A PROGRAM WHICH MEETS THE MINIMUM NEEDS OF OUR POORER CITIZENS.

I'M ALSO ASTONISHED AT THE SEEMING INDIFFERENCE OF MANY OF OUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO THE HIGH RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE RELUCTANCE TO

TAKE FIRM ACTIONS TO REDUCE IT. TEN YEARS AGO WE WERE ALARMED AS THE RATE APPROACHED FOUR PERCENT; TODAY WE SEEM SATISFIED THAT IT'S ONLY SEVEN AND ONE-HALF PERCENT.

AND WHEN THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE RISES AS RAPIDLY AS IT HAS DURING THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS, THE COMPETITION FOR JOBS MAKES IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE DISADVANTAGED AND FOR THE DISABLED TO FIND EMPLOYMENT. ALTHOUGH WE NOW HAVE FEDERAL LEGISLATION MANDATING THAT NO QUALIFIED PERSON CAN BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BECAUSE OF A PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HANDICAP, TWO FACTORS ARE NEEDED TO MAKE THIS EFFECTIVE.

FIRST, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES MUST BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP SKILLS NEEDED IN THE JOB MARKET.

AND SECOND, EMPLOYERS MUST BE MADE AWARE OF THE TALENTS AND ABILITIES OF HANDICAPPED PEOPLE AND MUST PROVIDE THE JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

THROUGH YOUR VOCATIONAL COUNSELING AND INDIVIDUALLY TAILORED WORK PROGRAMS YOU ARE DEMONSTRATING THAT THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR DENYING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ON THE BASIS OF MENTAL OR PHYSICAL DISABILITY.

YOU ARE SHOWING THAT HANDICAPPED PEOPLE, EVEN WHEN THEY HAVE LIVED

- 10 -

IN INSTITUTIONS FOR MANY YEARS, CAN LEARN, GROW AND DEVELOP THE SKILLS NEEDED TO ENABLE THEM TO LIVE IN AND BE A PART OF THE COMMUNITY.

IT IS OUR GOAL TO MAKE THESE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR EVERY MENTALLY RETARDED PERSON IN THIS STATE.

IN THE LAST FISCAL YEAR, THROUGHOUT PENNSYLVANIA, MORE THAN 76,000 DISABLED PERSONS RECEIVED PHYSICAL RESTORATIVE SERVICES -- DIAGNOSIS, CONSULTATION, TRAINING. THE NUMBER OF REHABILITATED PERSONS WHO WERE PLACED IN AN EMPLOYMENT SITUATION AND FOLLOW-UP SERVICE TOTLED ALMOST 22,000.

THOSE FIGURES HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SECOND FACTOR I MENTIONED -- JOB OPPORTUNITY.

THE REGULATIONS OF THE FEDERAL REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 SPECIFY THAT EVERY GOVERNMENT CONTRACTOR OR SUBCONTRACTOR HOLDING A CONTRACT OF \$50,000 OR MORE AND HAVING 50 OR MORE EMPLOYEES MUST PREPARE AND MAINTAIN AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM FOR THE EMPLOYMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF QUALIFIED HANDICAPPED WORKERS. THIS IS ALSO REQUIRED IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND IN ANY PROGRAM RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

THE INITIAL REACTION OF THE BUSINESS WORLD TO THIS REGULATION WAS

ONE OF FRUSTRATION AND CONFUSION.

NEED TO ASSIST EMPLOYERS TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW, THE BUREAU OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY INITIATED A PROGRAM AT THE JOHNSTOWN REHABILITATION CENTER TO PROVIDE TRAINING TO PERSONNEL OFFICERS IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY SO THAT THEY CAN INTERVIEW AND ASSESS HANDICAPPED APPLICANTS PROPERLY.

REPRESENTATIVES OF MAJOR CORPORATIONS THROUGHOUT THE STATE HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE SEMINARS AND HAVE GAINED A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF JOB APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES AND HOW TO ASSESS THEIR SKILLS AND POTENTIAL AS POSSIBLE EMPLOYEES.

ALTHOUGH I HAVE DWELT MAINLY ON PROGRAMS IN THE COMMUNITY, WHERE THE VAST MAJORITY OF MENTALLY RETARDED PEOPLE CAN BEST BE SERVED, WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT PROVIDING QUALITY CARE FOR THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO NEED MORE INTENSIVE TREATMENT IN INSTITUTIONS.

INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS ARE EMPHASIZING INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND PROGRAMMING BASED ON EACH INDIVIDUAL'S SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS. THROUGH THE COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS PROGRAM AND EXPANDED COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS, THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTS IN OUR STATE SCHOOLS HAS CONTINUED TO DECREASE. THIS HAS RELIEVED MUCH OF THE OVERCROWDING THAT

HAD EXISTED IN SOME OF OUR FACILITIES AND, COMBINED WITH MORE STAFF, HAS INCREASED OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE A BETTER QUALITY OF CARE AND TREATMENT.

I UNDERSTAND THERE HAS BEEN SOME CONCERN IN THIS AREA CONCERNING THE CLOSING OF THE MENTAL RETARDATION UNIT AT WARREN STATE HOSPITAL, AND THAT SOME ACTION IS BEING CONSIDERED TO PREVENT ITS CLOSING.

I'D LIKE TO POINT OUT A FEW FACTS WHICH I HOPE WILL CLARIFY THE ISSUE.

WHEN THE MENTAL RETARDATION UNITS AT THE STATE MENTAL HOSPITALS WERE ORIGINALLY PLANNED, THEY WERE NOT INTENDED TO BE PERMANENT -- ALL WERE CONSIDERED TRANSITIONAL FACILITIES. ESTABLISHED IN APRIL OF 1974, THE PURPOSE OF THE WARREN UNIT WAS TO INSURE THAT ALL RESIDENTS WITH A BASIC DIAGNOSIS OF MENTAL RETARDATION WOULD BE GIVEN THE NECESSARY PROGRAM AND MEDICAL CARE TO ENABLE THEM TO REACH THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL AND EVENTUALLY RETURN TO THE COMMUNITY.

THE WARREN UNIT HAS SOME RESIDENTS THAT DO NOT BELONG IN A MENTAL RETARDATION UNIT. SOME ARE MENTALLY ILL AND SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE STATE HOSPITAL FOR PROPER TREATMENT. OTHERS WHO ARE RETARDED CAN RECEIVE MORE APPROPRIATE TREATMENT IN THE COMMUNITY OR IN OTHER FACILITIES CLOSER

TO MAJOR POPULATION AREAS.

IN CONSIDERING THE CLOSING OF SUCH SPECIAL UNITS, THAT WILL NOT HAPPEN BEFORE EACH RESIDENT'S NEEDS ARE CAREFULLY REVIEWED -- THE GOAL IS TO INSURE THE BEST AND MOST APPROPRIATE CARE TO MEET INDIVIDUAL NEEDS EITHER THROUGH QUALITY INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS OR THROUGH COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES.

RESIDENTS OF THE WARREN UNIT WILL NOT BE MOVED INTO OTHER AREAS UNLESS ADEQUATE PROGRAMS ARE NOT AVAILABLE THROUGH THE STATE HOSPITAL OR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. AND THERE WILL BE NO REDUCTION IN STAFF AS A RESULT OF ANY CHANGES MADE.

THESE PLANS ARE A PART OF OUR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE QUALITY CARE FOR MENTALLY RETARDED PEOPLE AND TO FACILITATE THEIR RETURN TO MORE INDEPENDENT LIVING SETTINGS IN OUR COMMUNITIES WITH SUPPORT FROM STRENGTHENED COUNTY PROGRAMS.

I KNOW THAT YOU ARE ONLY TOO WELL AWARE OF THE FACT THAT FUNDS FOR HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS ARE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO GET. IT IS URGENT THAT WE USE THOSE FUNDS THAT WE HAVE AS EFFECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE. AT THE STATE LEVEL, WE ARE WORKING TOWARD BETTER COORDINATION OF ALL PROGRAMS SO THAT WE CAN ELIMINATE GAPS IN SERVICES AND CREATE THE KINDS

OF PROGRAMS THAT WILL BEST SERVE THE NEEDS OF OUR HANDICAPPED CITIZENS.

MERCER COUNTY STANDS AS AN EXAMPLE OF STATE, COUNTY, AND PRIVATE AGENCIES WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO SERVE THE MENTALLY RETARDED. FEW COUNTIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH EQUAL THE DEDICATION YOU HAVE SHOWN AND THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS YOU HAVE MADE.

I COMMEND YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP AND ASSURE YOU THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH YOU TO ACHIEVE OUR COMMON GOALS.

JOHN F. KENNEDY, JR., BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

SENATE, 1970-1971

SENATE JOURNAL NO. 1

SENATE JOURNAL NO. 2

SENATE JOURNAL NO. 3

SENATE JOURNAL NO. 4

SENATE JOURNAL NO. 5

SENATE JOURNAL NO. 6

SENATE JOURNAL NO. 7