

PRETTY WORDS? OR A REAL COMMITMENT?

STATE OFFICIALS TALK ABOUT ALTERNATIVES TO INSTITUTIONS

"The major thrust is to provide services in the community which enable people to receive help where and when it is needed and to avoid unnecessary institutionalization. Community alternatives are making it possible for families to remain intact."

Frank Beal
Secretary, DPW
November 1975

FACT:

ONLY 1 NEW GROUP HOME FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY STARTED
FROM JULY '75 - JUNE '76.

"Our goal is to provide services at the community level wherever possible to help people remain out of institutions and to give them support and opportunities for normal community living."

Frank Beal
Secretary, DPW
September 1975

FACT:

NO NEW GROUP HOMES FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY FUNDED FOR
THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

"For years in the past, mentally retarded persons were shunted into institutions where they became dependent and isolated from community life. Today, we know that most retarded persons can live and work in our communities."

Helene Wohlgemuth
Secretary, DPW
November 1974

FACT:

NOT ONE ADDITIONAL PERSON WAS SERVED IN GROUP HOMES
IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY DURING PAST 12 MONTHS.

"An innovation of the Shapp administration to help end forever the warehousing of retarded citizens in institutions, the community living arrangements program was initiated during the 1971-72 fiscal year."

Helene Wohlgemuth
Secretary, DPW
News Release
January 1974

FACT:

THERE IS NO PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO GO WHO URGENTLY
NEED RESIDENTIAL CARE. ADMISSIONS TO STATE
INSTITUTIONS ARE CLOSED. PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS
ARE FILLED AND NO ALTERNATIVES ARE BEING BUILT.

"Within the next five years the Department is planning to have approximately 7,000 mentally retarded persons placed in community living arrangements." (statewide)

Helene Wohlgemuth
Secretary, DPW
News Release
September 1973

FACT:

THE STATE HAS FALLEN FAR BEHIND THEIR PLAN FOR
COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY.
\$1 MILLION LESS HAS BEEN GIVEN TO OUR COUNTY THAN
PROMISED. 100 LESS PEOPLE ARE BEING SERVED THAN
PLANNED.

"The time has come for a change, and Pennsylvania is in the vanguard of that change. We have committed ourselves to alternatives .. like foster homes, sheltered workshops, and community group home."

Helene Wohlgemuth
Secretary, DPW
March 1973

FACT:

DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS NO ADDITIONAL FOSTER
FAMILY HOMES WERE PLANNED FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY.

"The Governor (Milton Shapp) told Mrs. Clapp (PARC President) that Welfare Secretary Helene Wohlgemuth is committed to the concept of community living for the mentally retarded and is moving in that direction."

The Pittsburgh Press
September 26, 1972

FACT:

THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF ADULT TRAINING PROGRAMS IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY. OVER 200 INDIVIDUALS ARE SITTING AT HOME AWAITING THE START OF NEW SHELTERED WORKSHOPS OR ADULT ACTIVITY CENTERS.

"The (Governor) Shafer administration is favorably considering a plan to house mentally retarded persons in small privately operated group homes instead of institutions. .. The Secretary of Welfare Stanley Miller pledged to eliminate forever the warehousing of human beings in institutions."

The Sunday Bulletin (Philadelphia)
February 8, 1970

FACT:

SINCE THERE IS A LACK OF ALTERNATIVES, THE STATE RECOMMENDS IN ALMOST EVERY CASE TO SEND RETARDED CHILD OR ADULT TO WESTERN STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL. FORTUNATELY THE COURTS HAVE OVERRULED DPW AND SAID THAT PLACEMENT IN INSTITUTIONS WOULD DENY THE CHILD OR ADULT THE TREATMENT AND CARE TO WHICH THEY HAVE A LEGAL RIGHT.

SECRETARY BEAL

We invited Secretary of the State Department of Public Welfare, Mr. Frank Beal, to meet with us about the need for more alternatives to institutionalization.

Although any one man's power is limited, Mr. Beal can:

- (1) listen to your real needs;
- (2) make the five year plans for community services more ambitious;
- (3) propose, with Governor Shapp's support, a supplemental appropriation for the legislature to consider for more funds;
- (4) propose a higher priority in next year's budget for community services.

He has worked in several key administrator positions for Governor Shapp before becoming Secretary on January 6, 1975.

Mr. Beal reports directly to Governor Milton Shapp.

The Public Welfare Department is the largest in the state government, with an annual budget of more than \$1.5 billion.

The program includes those for the aging, public assistance, food stamps, medical assistance, child welfare, the visually handicapped, day care, juveniles, and the one we're interested in, mental health and mental retardation (annual budget over \$450 million).

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

Senate Bill 1442, dealing with residential zoning, is currently in the Public Health & Welfare Committee of the State Senate.

The thrust of the Bill provides that local zoning laws cannot prohibit group homes from any residential neighborhood.

It is important that we seek immediate action since the legislature will adjourn for the summer on Monday, June 28. We urge you to contact your legislators to request members of the Senate Health & Welfare Committee to release this bill for a vote on Monday.

If you would like a copy of the Bill so that you may write your legislators during the summer, contact the ACC-PARC office, 1001 Brighton Road, Pgh., Pa. 15233.

BUT CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS IMMEDIATELY OR THE BILL CANNOT BE PASSED WHEN THE LEGISLATURE CONVENES IN THE FALL.