



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

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NEWS

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PROGRAM REVIEW STARTS AT EASTERN STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL AND FOUR OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Secretary of Public Welfare Helene Wohlgemuth today announced that an in-depth review of policies, programs and procedures at Department institutions will begin Monday, May 21, at Eastern State School and Hospital, Trevese, Bucks County, and expand to four other facilities May 29.

"It is the intention of the Shapp Administration to effect changes in our institutions to assure the highest quality of care possible for the residents," Mrs. Wohlgemuth stated.

"Since their creation, state institutions have operated as independent, autonomous entities.

"As each institution is visited, the review teams will identify program and administrative deficiencies. The deficiencies will form the basis for setting time limited goals for corrective action. The goals will include specific plans to improve a given situation and methods by which those goals can be reached.

"After the review teams have finished the initial phase, departmental personnel will monitor progress at each institution. The monitoring will include the measurement of change to meet the originally specified goals. After-hour and night visitations will be an integral part of the monitoring phase.

"This methodology will not only assure improvements in patient care but also enhance the Department's ability to establish and measure each institution's ability to provide quality care," Secretary Wohlgemuth said.

Co-chairmen of the survey team at Eastern State School and Hospital--an institution for mentally ill children--are Dr. Charles Palm, Southeastern Regional Commissioner for Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Department of Public Welfare (DPW) Philadelphia, and Dr. Moyer C. Sonis, Professor of Child Psychiatry, Western Psychiatric Institution and Clinic, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh.

Members of the study group are: Mrs. Barrie R. Cassileth, Director of Communications, Pennsylvania Mental Health, Inc., Philadelphia; Miss Sylvia B. Green, Director, Bureau of Mental Hospital Programs, DPW, Harrisburg; Fred Kinsinger, Director of Licensing, DPW, Harrisburg; Paul C. Lehman, Psychiatric Nursing Director, Philadelphia State Hospital, Philadelphia; Dr. James Reisinger, Holy Spirit Hospital, Mental Health Center, Camp Hill; Miss Beth Dolde, Director of Therapeutic Recreation, Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, Philadelphia; Mrs. Marjorie Steever, Medicare Consultant, DPW, Harrisburg; Tim Warfield, Director of the Bureau of Planning and Evaluation, Office of Mental Health, DPW, Harrisburg; Mrs. Rhea Weiss, Chief, Division of Children and Youth, Office of Mental Health, DPW, Harrisburg; Dr. Maxim Young, Director of Evaluation and Research, Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, Philadelphia; Willard Zeigler, Speech and Hearing Consultant, Office of Mental Retardation, DPW, Harrisburg; Mrs. Kathryn Trotta, Director of Activities and Occupational Therapy, Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, Philadelphia.

Additional review teams of experts--composed of high-level personnel of the department's regional and central offices as well as non-departmental members--are organized and will visit four more institutions starting May 29th. The institutions are: Cornwells Heights Youth Development Center, Bucks County; Hamburg State School and Hospital, Berks County; Harrisburg State Hospital, Dauphin County, and Philadelphia State Hospital.

"We will look into areas that can't be easily measured. We will talk with residents and staff members in efforts to find out what the problems are.

"We will ask the kind of questions nobody else is asking. We will measure the relationships between people. We will identify program strengths and weaknesses," the Secretary said.

The Department has already started a staffing review of the state mental health institutions and the new special team effort will carry that work forward as well as evaluating other types of facilities.

Last year, the Department initiated a major review of all private licensed facilities for the mentally retarded, receiving information enabling better treatment for persons in such facilities.

All Department of Public Welfare institutions including mental hospitals, institutions for the retarded, state general hospitals, youth development centers and restoration centers are being reviewed on a continuing basis throughout the year.

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