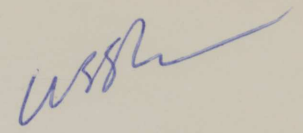


DRAFT
5/8/75



Coroner Farrell Jackson
County Court House
Washington, Pa. 15301

Dear Coroner Jackson:

A complete response to the acquisitions which you have forwarded to us would be much too long to read. Briefly, the acquisition letter:

- 1) Exaggerates the aggressiveness or balance of Western State School and Hospital residents. The few residents who exhibit these behaviors could certainly be helped by behavior ~~shaping~~ shaping programs. We believe these few residents need a professionally structured program and constant supervision and not a secure facility (i.e., locked doors, restraints, and isolation rooms) that the union requests.
- 2) In terms of the second acquisition about people being prepared for the community who are not ready to be prepared, this is slightly exaggerated also. Western State School and Hospital has had the slowest grade of community placement of any of the four state schools and hospitals in this area. Western tends to be very cautious about sending people to the community or placing them in programs on grounds to prepare them for the community.

It's our guess that these few residents would behave better in the community than they do at Western State School and Hospital. The lack of consistency of numerous workers that come in contact with each resident daily, the lack of activity, the chaotic and restrictive nature of an institution are all causes of some of the aggressive behavior.

- 3) The acquisition that the Acting Superintendent invites and listens to these "more aggressive residents tattling on employees" is very hard to believe. Dr. Scott, who I have a great deal of respect for, does have a good rapport with

with the residents who live at Western State and does keep track how some of the residents are doing by spending time with them in her office or on the lodges. Employees should be grateful that they finally have a superintendent who cares about the people they care about, the residents.

As to the "volatile atmosphere of assaults, beatings, and acquisitions where no methods of restraint ~~exp~~ or physical protection exists", the situation is described in exaggerated terms and we believe the use of restraints only furthers the individual's stress and violates state and federal regulations prohibiting the use of restraints except in emergency situations.

We certainly agree that a critical shortage of staff still exists. A reason for this is that the Department of Public Welfare has failed to live up to the commitment of the legislature in the number of positions that were allocated in November. Only 40 of the minimal 89 staff needed (child care aides) at WSSH have been employed. Why the Department of Public Welfare has not fully implemented the tentative legislative act, 75A, ~~xxxx~~ should be investigated. On the other hand, the absenteeism rate at WSSH is extremely high. In other words, the workers make it more difficult on their fellow workers by not showing up.

Concerning the charge of multiply handicapped individuals not being able to get out in case of an emergency or fire because they are above ground level in the Clinic Building, we too would solicit your evaluation. This type of resident has been living above ground level (not to the same extent) since the inception of (Bob, you didn't finish this sentence on the tape)

As to the charges to the Governor, I'm not really sure what the acquisition is. In our view, Governor Shapp has produced less than he committed in the way of services to the mentally retarded. But, we recognize that Shapp has done more for the citizen who is mentally retarded than any previous Governor.

To the charges against the Governor's "legislative buddies",
^s perhaps they are in fear. The legislative representatives have responded favorably to constituents it serves about overcrowding and understaffing at Western State School and Hospital. In November, they legislated additional money for additional staff throughout the state. They have been faithful in tracking down reasons that appropriated money has that not been converted into child care aides.

Finally, I would like to speak to the charges against Dr. Scott. We have worked with her for several years in her position of Director of Special Education at the Pittsburgh Schools and, most recently, in her position at Western State. Although sometimes she is abrasive, we respect her as a compassionate and effective administrator. Perhaps she is disliked by employees because she requires from them effort they should have been making all along. Dr. Scott has the support of the other citizens' groups, as well.

I hope this opinion is satisfactory to you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Virginia Thornburgh
President