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# Pennsylvania Mental Health, inc.

April 27, 1973

The Hon. Milton J. Shapp  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
State Capitol  
Harrisburg, Pa. 17120

Received in  
SECRETARY'S OFFICE  
APR 27 1973  
DPT. OF PUBLIC WELFARE  
Ref. to *Scitg*

Dear Governor Shapp:

We are aware of the situation which has developed recently at Polk State School, and it was discussed by our Executive Committee yesterday. Without commenting at all about the process by which this situation was handled by the Department of Public Welfare, we want to express our complete agreement with the view that restraints such as the pens and cages used at Polk are incompatible with modern and humane treatment methods and should be forbidden at all institutions for the mentally disabled.

There is no evidence whatever that mentally disabled persons are more inclined toward assaultive or violent behavior than are any other persons or groups.

Furthermore, we think that the use of such restraints illustrates the need for continuing public awareness and for action with respect to the conditions in Pennsylvania's institutions.

Staff must be attuned to humane treatment and to the primary goal of strengthening the individual patient's capacity to reenter society. A custodial or "warehouse" approach is not acceptable.

PMH is categorically opposed to inhumane methods of care and to the concept of permanent institutionalization of people. We urge you to ensure that all institutional treatment be mandated to further the patient's earliest release to a community facility and to support much needed development of community services.

Our major efforts are toward replacement of institutions by local facilities or integrating them into community-based programs. So long as institutions do exist we will not abandon our concern that humane and appropriate care be afforded those who still remain within their walls.





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This statewide citizens' organization stands ready to assist you in these endeavors. We further pledge our full support to you in your efforts to procure adequate funding to effect such institutional changes and to develop needed community services for the mentally disabled.

Very truly yours,

Hilda Robbins  
Mrs. Jack W. Robbins  
President

Harry J. Rubin  
Harry J. Rubin, Esq.  
Chairman of the Board

HHR:HJR/jr

cc--Mrs. Helene Wohlgemuth ✓  
William B. Beach, Jr., M.D.  
Edward R. Goldman