

REFORMING OF THE STATE SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS AND INTERIM CARE COMMITTEE

The last three months have been full with ACC-PARC words and actions on interim care. Most of those moments were planned by individuals on the Executive Committee and Board. Now we want to regroup, involve more people, and set objectives. We need to form strategies and systematically express our objectives.

There is only one purpose: improve the care for our citizens by reform of the Pennsylvania System of residential care of the mentally retarded.

Why do we need a committee? We're pleased with our efforts thus far. Will we bog down under group education and decision making? What are the advantages of the committee? (1) We're charged with overwhelming tasks. Unless there are many more hands and heads, existing workers will burn out. (2) Having burned out, we'll be long outlived by the problems. This has happened to reform movements before. The alternative is to create an ongoing structure (this committee) where concerned citizens can strive for excellent residential care for our citizens.

(3) We're now facing tougher issues. The obviously abusive private facilities are being closed; but how do you close or drastically improve a non-stimulating custodial care (yet non-abuse) facility? What actions are taken about state operated facilities with similar inadequacies? When is medication necessary as a behavior restraint? and when is medication abusive? Unless we think through these issues, solicit varied points of view, through debate, our answers may not be as helpful as wished.

(4) Finally, we should relieve the burden of lengthy and time-pressured interim care decisions from the Board of Directors. With new directors in pre-school and opportunity center divisions, much board effort will be required for a look inward. The Board remains the legally empowered authority of ACC-PARC. This committee will be able to make more definitive recommendations than previously brought to the Board. The recommendations will be the result of complete and proper discussion by concerned citizens, a procedure to which ACC is fully committed.