



WALTER W. COHEN  
SECRETARY

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE  
P. O. Box 2675  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17105

JUN 27 1983

RECEIVED JUN 30 1983

*Bob Melkin*

(717) 787-2600/3600

Mrs. N. Karen Kelly  
Association for Retarded Citizens-  
Allegheny County  
1001 Brighton Road  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15233

Dear Mrs. Kelly:

I have carefully reviewed your letter of June 2, 1983 with its attached reports. I completely agree with your concern regarding the program improprieties and deficiencies noted at the Highland Park Center. The use of "electric shock" and other aversive therapies is a major concern to me.

On May 31, 1983, Dr. Jennifer Howse, Deputy Secretary for Mental Retardation, established an investigative team to address the various problems at this facility and recommend necessary corrective action. As you note, the team is headed by Erik Wittmann. It includes professionals from both the private and public sector. I understand that two individuals from the ARC Chapter in Allegheny County are represented on the committee. In the meantime, the Department has taken several steps to insure the safety and well-being of Highland Park residents.

On May 11, 1983, two of our behavioral experts conducted a review of the facility. Dr. Michael Dorsey and Dr. Michael Franzak examined specific aspects of the behavioral programming at the facility and have made several recommendations for needed changes. On June 7, 1983, Mr. Wittmann met with officials from Highland Park Center to establish the parameters of the review process.

I will take steps to see that the Highland Park Center audit conducted by the Department last year is released as soon as possible.

I am deeply appreciative of the assistance and concern of your association. Together we have a mutual responsibility to assure that all retardation facilities, whether public or private, do not violate the legal and human rights of our mentally retarded citizens.

Sincerely,

*Walter W. Cohen*

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