

NEWS RELEASE

Tri-County Mental Health Association

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FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATELY

The Tri-County Mental Health Association today called upon all people who serve mentally disabled persons to offer that treatment in a humane way. The plea came as a result of the reported use of cages at Polk State Hospital.

In a joint statement, Carl G. Wass, President, and Hubert E. Simpson, President-Elect of the local Association, said that they do not oppose general confinement of persons needing treatment, but they find it "incredible that providers of 'service' would confine people in cages which are too small for standing, or lying down".

They continued: "For years, the citizens' mental health movement has sought to remove the shackles and chains which were used as a restraint on patients in mental institutions, thus relegating them to the role of second class citizens. In fact, the symbol of the National Association for Mental Health is a bell which has been molded from melted shackles. With the efforts that have been made on behalf of humane treatment, it is unbelievable that inhumane methods of treatment still exist".

While calling for humane service in all treatment facilities, Mr. Wass and Mr. Simpson indicated that they are not judging the present situation at Polk State Hospital. No representative from Tri-County Mental Health Association has visited the Polk facility. Thus the local Association is not in a position to evaluate the merits of that particular treatment program.

However, one of the major purposes of the local Association is the promotion of sound mental health and, in keeping with that purpose, the Association decries the use of treatment methods that create intense physical discomfort, or increase emotional stresses.