

draft

Questions for appearance by Ginny Thornburgh:

Question: What is an interim care facility?

Comment: The State doesn't own them. They only buy services from them.

Question: Are all interim care facilities non-profit and Church related?

Answer: No. Out of the 55 or so in Pennsylvania, 40 or more are profit-making.

Question: How much money would a typical facility make?

Answer: That is very hard to say. The degree of profit depends on how much the operator skimps on physical facilities, staff and program. We can demonstrate that the least in theory. A facility for 40 or 50 residents could net \$50,000 or more annually.

Question: How much is paid for each resident?

Answer: Anywhere from \$11-15. You might note that a day program such as ours costs at least \$8 so for an additional \$3 to \$7 an individual had to feed, clothe, house, provide 24 hour supervision.

Question: What is the difference between interim care and State schools & hospitals for the mentally retarded?

Answer: As the name implies, State school & hospital is a State operated facility.

Question: Are they better than interim care?

Answer: Both the typical SSH and interim care facility stink. Within a state school & hospital conditions may vary. McQuire Memorial Home in Beaver County is an outstanding interim care facility.

Interim care facilities first came to public awareness as a result of the Louis Novak death at Hillcrest/Ridge View.

Question: Would you give us your impressions of the facility?

Answer: physical plant, bathrooms, sheep excrement, 1/2 dozen deaths, DPW's failure to close, 1/2 dozen letters of reprimand, Commonwealth Concerns....

Question: The Ridge View incident occurred in August. Your organization is now back in the news with Mountain Top Interim Care closing. Would you discuss Mountain Top?

Answer: Mountain Top is only 1 1/2 hours from Ridge View. It is in the same DPW region as Ridge View, under the leadership of Elliot Knauer.

Cosmetically, conditions at Mountain Top were better than Ridge View. Conversely, there was no concepted program at Mountain Top...outside toilet facilities...physical brutality... tremendous staff shortages (1964 they had 24 residents with five staff and 1972 47-50 residents with 5 staff)

Question: Would you comment on the DPW reaction to both facilities?

Answer: DPW has always had responsibility for licensing and inspecting these places. They in essence "accredit" them. From the Departments old files, there is a history of violations going back years. At Hillcrest/Ridge View it took a series of deaths, ending in Novak's alleged murder. At Mountaintop it required the intervention of ACC -- even then 2 separate department inspections were required before they were closed.

Question: Would you elaborate on these inspections?

Question: On Tuesday an alleged murder was revealed at Polk State School and Hospital. Would you like to comment?

Answer: Polk is a typical state school and hospital --- over crowded, understaffed and no program. At the most liberal interpretation it should not have more than 2,000 residents ... enrollment is closer to 3,000.

At the time of Raymond Helman's death, there was one supervisor 2 locked doors away on the first floor ...
(discuss other Polk matters)

Question: It seems that you are focusing on residential facilities. Are all mentally retarded in residential facilities? Should all of the mentally retarded be in institutions?

Answer: Definitely not. There are probably 200,000 mentally retarded in Pennsylvania. If everyone there now and on the waiting list were in institutions only 25,000 would be and that is 2 too many. The vast majority of the mentally retarded can live in the community. These brutal deaths are only the tip of the iceberg.

The entire institutional .. residential system as it is now conducted in Pennsylvania is archaic, dehumanizing and a waste. We have warehouses for people ... and not very good warehouses.

Recognized as a very long range goal is to close these facilities and place them with community group homes.

Question: Are you saying the mentally retarded belong in the community?

Answer: Yes. (elaborate)

Question: Are conditions that much better in the community?

Answer: They can be (Transitional living, public school programs, work opportunities, mental stimulation, etc.)

Question: Then you are satisfied with the public school program?

Answer: We are not. Let me talk about some of our dissatisfactions (Woolslair School, East Hills, Transportation snafos, lack of integration, no post-secondary TMR training program in the city or county.

Question: Didn't the Right to Education Consent Decree end this?

Answer: No. It gave us the tool .. the weapon
You can't legislate morality on the part of people.
Right to Education is a moral issue. If the legislators do not implement it, we ##### intend to see that they do.

Post results: younger children are being accepted and older children are being retained.

INSERT AFTER POLK *****

Question: What about Western State School & Hospital in Cannonsburg?

Answer: Tell about the Zeebrat boy.