

WWSW radio 97

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SECRETARY'S OFFICE

editorial

Ref. to _____

Editorial #22 - Dr. McClelland's Firing

Friday, April 27 - 8:45AM, 11:45AM, 1:45PM, 5:45PM, 6:45PM, 10:45PM

Saturday, April 28 - 2:45AM, 7:45AM, 12:45PM, 5:45PM

And now, speaking for WWSW Radio is Charles H. Warner, Executive Vice President and General Manager, with an editorial opinion ...

"The caging of patients at the Polk State Mental Hospital in Venango County seemed to come as a shock to State Welfare Secretary, Helene Wohlgemuth, on a surprise visit to the institution last week. The incident led to the immediate dismissal of Polk's Superintendent, James McClelland. WWSW feels that such a reaction may have been too hasty, and that such decisions need to be based on more reasoned and qualified scientific investigation. After all, Ms. Wohlgemuth herself told WWSW news in a recent interview that she was not a Psychologist and unsure of the best way to handle patients who are given to violent outbursts that could be harmful to themselves or others around them. We are sure people would like to think that there are better ways of handling such cases, but just how is a decision for trained mental health Psychologists to make.

Earlier this week Edward Goldman, who heads the office of Mental Retardation in the Welfare Department disclosed that he had visited Polk six months ago and seen the cages, and that he relayed his findings to Ms. Wohlgemuth. However, she denies any knowledge of such a report. Meanwhile, Dr. McClelland has stated that the cages have been used for nearly 15 years and that hundreds of people including state officials saw them.

WWSW endorses plans for a Senate Subcommittee investigation of the conditions at Polk, but until the announced probe is completed it seems only fair to rescind the firing order and put Dr. McClelland on a temporary suspension instead ... and while we're addressing the issue of investigations... how about one into the communications in the Welfare Department."

Responsible people with opposite points of view will be given the opportunity to express their opinions on WWSW.