



LOCAL MH/MR

NOTES

Published by

The TEXAS DEPARTMENT of MENTAL HEALTH and MENTAL RETARDATION
Box S, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711 512 453-7231

Vol. 2

January, 1970

No. 1

CENTERS NOT 'UNITS OF GOVERNMENT' UNDER 1970 TORT CLAIMS ACT

A community center for mental health and mental retardation services is not a "unit of government" upon which direct liability is imposed by the Texas Tort Claims Act.

This opinion was rendered recently by Texas Attorney General Crawford C. Martin, in response to a request by John Kinross-Wright, M.D., commissioner, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

The attorney general's opinion further states: "However, any liability incurred by an employee, officer, or agent of such an agency would be the responsibility and liability of the creating local governmental unit or units."

The Texas Tort Claims Act became effective Jan 1 and Dr. Kinross-Wright requested a clarification of the position and liability of community centers under the act, since community centers receive significant state grants-in-aid.

Attorney General Martin stated that "... it is our view that a community center is merely a component part of a 'unit of government' . . . Such a center is simply a local agency created either by unilateral action or contract by or between designated local governmental bodies."

WICHITA FALLS CENTER NAMES DIRECTOR

Harold Strauss, formerly of Akron, Ohio, is director of the new Wichita Falls Community Center for MH/MR Services. Strauss formerly directed a mental retardation program in Akron.

The new center's address is 402 E. Scott, Wichita Falls, Tex. 76301.

GOVERNOR SMITH NAMES THREE TO MH/MR LAW STUDY COMMITTEE

Gov. Preston Smith appointed three members to the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Law Study Committee.

Gov. Smith's appointments are: Hale County Judge C.L. Abernethy of Plainview; Don Wooten of Snyder, chairman of the board of Roscoe, Snyder, and Pacific Railway Co.; and Mrs. Helen Jane Farabee of Wichita Falls, former assistant dean of women at the University of Texas at Austin.

Judge Abernethy is a member and former chairman of the State Advisory Council for the Construction of Community Mental Health Centers and Mental Retardation Facilities.

Wooten also is a member of the council.

Mrs. Farabee is a member of the boards of the Wichita Mental Health Association and the Texas Association for Mental Health.

Six more members, three from the Texas Senate and three from the House are to be appointed to the study committee by Lt. Gov. Ben Barnes and House Speaker Gus Mutscher.

ANNIVERSARY FOR BEXAR COUNTY CENTER TO INCLUDE SPEECHES BY YARBOROUGH

U.S. Senator Ralph W. Yarborough will be honored guest and featured speaker, Jan. 24, at the first anniversary of the Bexar County Community MH/MR Center in San Antonio.

Yarborough will discuss pending health legislation at a 7:30 a.m. breakfast of San Antonio-area pediatricians and psychiatrists, and will deliver the main address commemorating the center's first year of service, at 2 p.m., at the University of Texas Medical School Auditorium.

The senator will be guest of honor at a luncheon at 12:30 p.m., attended by state and local public officials and representatives of agencies participating in MH/MR work.

The luncheon will be preceeded at 11 a.m. by a reception for Yarborough at the Inman Christian Center, and a 10 a.m. tour of facilities of the San Antonio Association for Retarded Children.

Among those invited to attend the ceremonies are TDMHMR representatives, the Bexar County MH/MR board of trustees, education officials, and representatives of state, county, and local government.

SPECIAL EDUCATION MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO COMMUNITY CENTERS

Community mental health and mental retardation centers are eligible for free services provided by the Special Education Instructional Materials Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

These services include access to a central depository of professional texts and instructional materials for day-care center educational programs; the loan of a wide variety of instructional materials on education and habilitation of the mentally ill and mentally retarded children; consultation and guidance services; and other specialized services.

The Instructional Materials Center also offers regular university courses and short term non-credit courses.

TDMHMR OPENS NEW CENTRAL OFFICE

The TDMHMR has opened its new Central Office headquarters at 45th at Lamar in Austin.

The three-story facility is located on 45th street next to the former headquarters.

The telephone number for all incoming calls to Central Office is (512) 454-3761.

FEDERAL GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR MH/MR LIBRARY PROGRAMS

Federal grants available under the Medical Library Assistance Act of 1965 may be used to create or expand MH/MR medical libraries, and train library personnel.

Organizations eligible to apply for the grants include public and private non-profit institutions, medical societies, universities, and private non-profit cooperating libraries.

Construction grants may be used to construct new health science library facilities, or expand, remodel, or renovate existing facilities.

Resource grants permit libraries to expand their collections through acquisitions of books, photos, and audiovisual aids.

Training grants may be used for research and service training for qualified medical and health service librarians.

Special grants for scientific projects and publications related to health service libraries are also available.

Information may be obtained from: Extramural Programs, Resources Division, National Library of Medicine, 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Md. 20014. ■

WACO-McLENNAN BOARD APPROVES GRANT REQUEST; ADDS MEDICAL DIRECTOR

The Waco-McLennan County MH/MR Board of Trustees will apply for a federal mental health staffing grant to expand the mental health services of the Waco McLennan County MH/MR Center.

A full-time medical director has been added to the center's staff, allowing expansion of outpatient clinic services and the partial hospitalization program.

Federal funds currently included in the center's budget are a mental retardation staffing grant from HEW, a grant from Model Cities supplementary funds, and a grant from the Department of Agriculture.—Bascom Hodges ■

VOLUNTEERS' PRIVATE DONATIONS HELP OPERATE GREENVILLE CENTER

Active volunteers have helped develop an effective mental health and mental retardation service program in Greenville.

The Hunt County Opportunity Center in Greenville occupies a former doctor's building containing approximately 40 rooms, and offers a wide array of services in one central location.

The building was rented with funds from private donations.

Developed from the nucleus of a Terrell State Hospital Mental Health Outreach Program, the Opportunity Center programs include:

—Pre-school classes for retarded children. Services are provided by volunteers. Equipment and materials were donated.

—A full-time registered nurse and clerical worker.

—Family counseling provided by doctoral students from East Texas State University.

—An outpatient clinic for Terrell State Hospital.

—A well-baby clinic staffed by doctors who volunteer their services.

—A nursery, staffed by volunteers.

—Physical therapy, provided by a volunteer therapist.

The center plans to expand its programs to include counseling in marriage, finances, alcoholism, and juvenile problems.

Vocational rehabilitation and sheltered workshop services for the retarded and physically handicapped are also planned. ■

TDMHMR PARTICIPATES IN DISPLAYS, CEREMONIES FOR 'GOVERNOR FOR A DAY'

The Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation provided one of the largest and most comprehensive exhibits at "Governor for a Day" ceremonies honoring State Senator Criss Cole of Houston, Jan. 10.

The display emphasized TDMHMR's efforts in rehabilitation of the handicapped.

Sen. Cole, who was blinded in combat in World War II, turned the limelight on other handicapped Texans and displays for their accomplishments and potential. More than 70 groups and agencies participated.

The TDMHMR exhibit included audio-visual displays and samples of work done in rehabilitation programs at special schools for the retarded and at state mental hospitals.

A miniature workshop provided by the Work and Evaluation Center of Austin State School was set up adjacent to the TDMHMR exhibit. Residents of the school demonstrated actual production of art plaster decorative products and boat seat manufacturing.

The Sunshine Singers of Mexia State School presented a program of choral music in the north gallery of the Senate chamber.

TDMHMR also was represented in an exhibit of art work by handicapped persons from all participating state agencies and organizations. The exhibit, held in the House chamber, included ten paintings by patients at state hospitals and ten paintings by state school residents.

The TDMHMR exhibit was coordinated by Robert E. Vassallo, director for rehabilitation services, and by Leroy Prodoehl, project director of information, education, and referral service. ■

HALFWAY HOUSE OPENS IN FORT WORTH

Fairchild House, a Fort Worth mental health halfway house, opened recently with nine residents and three staff members.

The halfway house operates in conjunction with the Tarrant County Community MH/MR Center and in cooperation with the Fort Worth State Mental Health Outpatient Clinic.

The house is named for Claire Fairchild. Until his retirement last August, Fairchild was assistant commissioner for the Texas Education Agency in charge of vocational rehabilitation and special education.

Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Pater are houseparents. Beverly Stoy is executive director.

The house has facilities for 27 residents. ■

EAGLE PASS OUTREACH CLINIC OPENED

The Eagle Pass Mental Health Clinic began serving patients four days before its official opening on Dec. 15.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony conducted by Eagle Pass Mayor A. Flores officially opened the clinic, an outreach program of San Antonio State Hospital. Chamber of Commerce officials and other civic leaders participated in the ceremony.

Also attending were B.O. Lewis, M.D., Maverick County health officer, Joseph G. Cocke, M.D., acting superintendent of San Antonio State Hospital, and clinic staff members.

The clinic's staff includes: Joseph Nillo, M.D., physician; Mrs. Beatrice Trust, caseworker assistant; and Rosa de la Cruz, clerk.—Robert E. Hendrix, Jr. ■

EIGHT NAMED TO ABILENE MHA BOARD

Eight persons were named to the board of directors for the Abilene Association for Mental Health.

They are W.W. Bradshaw, Mrs. L.W. Cain, John Grist, O.E. Harper, M.D., Tom Huser, Paul Southern, Mrs. Bob Todd, and Dub Wofford.

They were appointed for three-year terms ending Dec. 31, 1972. ■

WACO CAFETERIA, TEACHER CITED FOR RETARDATION WORK IN 1969

A Waco cafeteria and a young Waco teacher have been honored by the Waco Association for Retarded Children (WARC).

The Picadilly Cafeteria was named WARC's "Employer of the Year" for 1969, for its hiring of special education students participating in the school-work program.

Linda Abernathy, a special education teacher at Kirk-Wilson Elementary School, received the association's "Individual Award," for her work with the retarded.

Miss Abernathy, a Baylor University graduate, has worked as a playground supervisor for the mentally retarded in the Waco Parks and Recreation Department. She also has served as sponsor for Teens Aid the Retarded (TARS) and as a counselor at the Region 7 camp for the retarded at Camp Val Verde.

The awards were presented at WARC's annual meeting, Dec. 16, at the McLennan County Rehabilitation Center for Children and Adults. ■

CORPUS CHRISTI GROUP SPONSORS COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY SEMINAR

Suicide Prevention, Inc., of Corpus Christi, conducted a seminar on the volunteer's role in community psychology, Dec. 12-13.

The featured speaker was Richard K. McGee, Ph.D., associate professor of clinical psychology at the University of Florida and director of the Suicide Prevention Center in Gainesville, Fla.

The seminar was open to the public. Those attending included volunteers from Suicide Prevention, Inc., and the Coastal Bend Association for Mental Health. ■

ORTHOPSYCHIATRIC SESSION TO EMPHASIZE COMMUNITY CENTERS

A session of the American Orthopsychiatric Association's 47th annual meeting in San Francisco will emphasize community mental health centers.

A major theme of the annual meeting, March 23-26, is the "urban scene." A morning session March 24 is "Community Mental Health Centers—Panacea for What?" The speaker is Horace G. Whittington, M.D., of the Department of Health and Hospitals, Denver.

Forty program events at the meeting will be devoted to the critical urban situation in America, including the role of mental health.

A registration of 10,000 is expected. Seventy-six workshops and 42 panels are planned, and more than 150 formal papers will be presented. ■

FIRST OF FIVE RECREATION WORKSHOPS IS HELD IN AUSTIN

The first in a series of five workshops on community recreation programs for the mentally retarded was held in Austin, Jan. 11-13.

The workshop participants discussed community recreation programs for retardates on a state-wide level and planned four regional workshops, to be held in the near future.

The workshops, financed through a federal grant, are sponsored by the Amarillo and Beaumont State Centers for Human Development.

Two workshops in North Texas will be directed by Ernest Kanemura of the Amarillo State Center for Human Development. The two in South Texas will be directed by Richard Smith of the Beaumont Center.

The Workshops will be open to personnel from community centers that sponsor mental retardation programs.

Dates and locations of the regional workshops will be announced later. ■

TAYLOR COUNTY MH CLINIC OPENED

The Taylor County Mental Health Clinic is in operation at 309 Pecan St., Abilene.

Mrs. Connie Hallock is director of the clinic.

Consultants include a psychiatrist and a psychologist. ■

BROWNWOOD CENTER CHANGES NAME, ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Brownwood-Brown County MH/MR Center has changed its name to Central Texas MH/MR Center.

All correspondence to the center should be addressed to 100 Melwood, Brownwood, Tex. 76801.

Newly appointed members of the board of trustees for the center are: the Rev. John W. Darden, chairman; Harry Miller, Jr., co-chairman; Mrs. Nell Cunningham, secretary; and Mrs. Ferris Clements, Mrs. Velma Martin, W.T. Harlow, William O. Breedlove, Jim Dudley, and Mrs. Marilyn Nini.—Judy Bybee. ■

LIBRARY OFFERS DRUG INFORMATION

"The Abuse of Drugs," a small kit of materials, is being distributed by the community education coordinator of the Dallas Public Library.

The kit contains a list of recent magazine articles on drug abuse, a guide to psychedelic substances, and a pamphlet, "Marijuana Use by Young People," by Dr. Charles Winick, director of the drug dependence and abuse program of the American Social Health Association. ■

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you receive your *Notes* by mail and you change your mailing address, please advise the Communications Division, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Box S, Capitol Station, Austin, Tex. 78711. Please include both your old and new address. ■

LONGVIEW MENTAL HEALTH GROUP NAMES OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS

A.M. Willis Jr. and the Rev. Warrin Fry have been re-elected president and vice-president of the Longview Mental Health Association.

Elected to serve with them are: Mrs. Jay Ballard, recording secretary; Mrs. L.A. Colquite, corresponding secretary; and Steve Cole, treasurer.

New members elected to the board of directors for three-year terms are Mrs. Jay Ballard, Steve Cole, J.L. Everhart, Dr. Gwen Harwell, Mrs. J. Glenn Johnston, Mrs. Ray Milam, the Rev. S.Y. Nixon, and Dr. Kenneth Stephens.

Members re-elected to the board are: E.B. Crain, Dr. George Hardie, Rabbi Charles Mantinband, Dr. Earl E. Little, Mrs. Joe Rappeport, and Mrs. Jack Strong. ■

SAN ANGELO CITIZENS FORM DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION COUNCIL

A drug abuse education council will coordinate community efforts in drug abuse education at San Angelo.

Co-chairmen of the council are James M. Young, executive director of the Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center for Greater West Texas, and Ken Courtwright, an attorney who is spokesman on drug abuse education for the San Angelo Kiwanis Club.

Forty-one persons attended the council's organization meeting.

Drug abuse programs are planned for San Angelo schools. Public education sessions will also be held. ■

BEAUMONT COMMUNITY CENTER, MINISTERS HOLD GROUP SESSION

Members of the Beaumont Ministerial Alliance have participated in the second in a series of group consultation sessions with teams of psychiatrists and psychologists from the Jefferson County Center for Mental Health.

Six study sessions were held to evaluate the role of the minister in community psychiatry.

Participants discussed the dynamics of family life, dynamics of group formation, and content of programs suitable for church sponsorship.—Vergia Mae Musselwhite. ■

BAYTOWN CENTER GETS MR GRANT

A federal staffing grant of \$49,216 for mental retardation services has been approved for the Bayshore Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center in Baytown.

The staff includes Hilda LaNier, coordinator; Theodore Howell, M.D., physician; Mrs. Maria Shugart, secretary; Joanna Ellis, psychologist; Mrs. Ollie McCowan, social worker; Mrs. Lena Warren, nurse; and Mrs. Donna Roberts, speech therapist.

Services include diagnosis, evaluation, treatment and counseling, and community consultation and education programs. ■

PRESIDENT NIXON NAMES MH TASK FORCE

President Nixon has named a special Task Force on the mentally handicapped to assist him with ideas and recommendations for 1970 and beyond.

Task Force chairman is Mrs. Winthrop Rockefeller of Little Rock, Ark., wife of the governor of Arkansas.

Others on the 13-member Task Force include mental health and mental retardation experts, business leaders, and education officials. ■

"LOCAL MH/MR NOTES" CORRESPONDENTS

Paul Southern, Th.D., Abilene Area Center for MH/MR; Louise Evans, Amarillo MH/MR Regional Board of Trustees; John B. Spragens, MH/MR Center of Austin-Travis County; Mrs. Sharon L. Grimm, Brownwood MH/MR Center; Mrs. Elizabeth Woodley, Central Plains Comprehensive Community MH/MR Center, Plainview; Robert H. Dovenmuehle, M.D., Dallas County MH/MR Center; Henry Freeman, Galveston County MH/MR Services, Hitchcock; James R. Young, MH/MR Center for Greater West Texas, San Angelo; Merton Trast, Harris County MH/MR Services; Marion Shirah, Hidalgo County MH/MR Services; Vergia Mae Musselwhite, Jefferson County Community Center for MH.

Allan R. Cutting, Northeast Texas MH/MR Board, Texarkana; Mrs. Harold Vexler, Northwest Community Center, San Antonio; Mrs. J. G. Bryson, Nueces County Community Center for MH/MR, Corpus Christi; Gary K. Smith, Smith-Wood Counties Center for MH/MR Services, Tyler; G. Clark Anderson, Tarrant County MH/MR Center, Fort Worth; Mrs. Hugh C. Whitmore, Waco-McLennan County MH/MR Center; and Mrs. Dick Gose, Wichita Falls Community Center for MH/MR Services.

Items for *Local MH/MR Notes* should be forwarded to Communications, TDMHMR, prior to the end of each month for inclusion in the issue for the following month. Address such correspondence to *Local MH/MR Notes*, Communications Division, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Box S, Capitol Station, Austin, Tex. 78711. ■

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL RETARDATION

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