



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
HAVERFORD STATE HOSPITAL
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Following are excerpts from a letter by Dr. Barry to the Pa. Attorney General's office about Lenny's distribution of ALMP literature at Haverford. (See story on page one.)

...I am enclosing under cover for your examination and opinions a copy of a tract (ALMP's Politics of Phenothiazines--ed.) which has been made available to the patients at this hospital by the staff of the ABA Patients' Advocacy Group.

It has been reported to me by several of the treatment team leaders on the closed sections of the hospital that the availability of this highly charged material and the actions of the ABA representation has led to serious disruptions in the proper clinically determined chemotherapy of several patients committed under the involuntary provisions of the Mental Health Procedure Act...

...The highly vulnerable, sensitive, confused and frequently judgementally impaired person, who is hospitalized because he is unable to take proper care of himself, is the essential issue. Would not a reasonable person wonder about the disturbing effect of the polemics of political propaganda upon their conflicted, frightened, tormented minds, particularly when this propaganda would seem to promote divisiveness between those whose responsibility it is to provide treatment under the law and those who are judged in need of such treatment? Doesn't the issue broaden and deepen beyond definitions of first Amendment Rights when one considers that many of these people, by virtue of their state of mind and its confusion and anguishes, are not able to judgementally discriminate and defend adequately against these assaults and bombardments by cultists groups; groups who stridently and endlessly refer to "the deceitful guise of therapy and...waves of psychiatrists caused plagues."

Consider if you will the plight of the frightened, tormented, paranoid person, who, by definition has a problem--a clinical problem--not a political problem--with trust and whose sense of well being is splintered and fragmented under the pressure of his misperception of people and their motives. How will he then process and cope with the inflammatory polemics of this tract? The answer to this question is already becoming evident and a matter of record. I have been advised that some are now refusing the treatment they need...

...A summary of our overall experiences with the ABA Project since its inception at Haverford State Hospital would have to include the overall opinion that its effectiveness has become increasingly diminished in relation to its increased reliance on legal strategies and solutions to complex psychiatric problems and the coupling by lawyers of treatment/medical issues with the Civil Rights Movement...What these legal solutions do is to emphasize patients' rights and ignore their basic needs for treatment and understanding...

...the fundamental notion at work is that the autonomy of the patient must be protected against the coercive practices of the psychiatrist. The inevitable conclusion to this would be that protection of autonomy against coercion means that the patient must be protected by law against the doctor and the doctor/patient relationship must be transferred into a contractual relationship between equal parties. How does one go about making a truly psychotic person an equal party in a contractual relationship?

...These are representative of some of the developing concerns and conclusions, which are evident among staff members at this facility...In terms of the overall effect these issues have at the institutional level, it is my feeling that prompt attention in this matter is needed.

Sincerely,


Theodore J. Barry, M.D.

See next page for ALMP'S comments