

EDITOR'S NOTE

It is interesting that this first number of the Bulletin has a professor of law and a law student as the authors of its two principal papers. One cannot help wondering whether a course in medical writing for the student of medicine should not receive as much attention as courses in legal writing receive in schools of law!

Professor Morris' fine paper on the issue of the right to treatment raises many complex problems. The Mental Health Information Service in the State of New York is a measure of how much professional service is required to resolve some of them. However, it is also a measure of the tremendous cost involved and in many states this may be seen as prohibitive. For a beginning, and one that cannot be challenged on the basis of cost, courts could appoint attorneys to represent the interests of patients in every mental health facility that provides care for those who are involuntarily hospitalized. The local psychiatric society and the local bar association could review the credentials of candidates for such appointments and submit their recommendations to the court having jurisdiction. The salaries of the individuals who are thus appointed would be paid for by the court.

As had been the practice with The Newsletter, a paper by a law student, written as a requirement for a course in psychiatry and the law, is included in this first number of the Bulletin. The plight of men and women in jails who are obviously deeply troubled and yet have not been found incompetent to stand trial emphasizes once again the great need for cooperation between behavioral scientists and those traditionally employed in the criminal justice process.

Finally, it is gratifying to report that following the approval of those attending the annual meeting, the cost of publishing the Bulletin will be defrayed in part by a grant from Pfizer Laboratories during this first year of publication.

HET

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