

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE FIELD OF MENTAL RETARDATION

INDICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

It certainly was no idle boast this past June when President Johnson told a group from the Kennedy Foundation:

"Today we can say objectively that more has been done in the government in the past two years than in the previous two hundred years to meet the challenge of mental retardation."

And there is sound basis also for his prediction at the same time:

"Our efforts have only begun. We will continue until we find all the answers we have been seeking, until we find a place for all those who suffer with the problem. I believe that we will accomplish more toward overcoming mental retardation in the next five years than the world has accomplished in the last five hundred years."

A simple listing of the milestones is proof of that. Let's tick off the dates:

October 17, 1961

Panel on Mental Retardation appointed by President Kennedy to prepare report on or before December 31, 1962. "A National Plan to Combat Mental Retardation."

October 16, 1962

Panel Report submitted to President Kennedy.

December 24, 1962

Dr. Stafford L. Warren appointed as Special Assistant by President Kennedy to develop and coordinate programs in the field of mental retardation.

January 30, 1963

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development was established by the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service under authorization in Public Law 87-838, approved by President Kennedy on October 17, 1962.

Prepared in the Office of the Special Assistant to the President for Mental Retardation September 25, 1964.

*See
Mental
Health*

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- February 5, 1963 Message from President John F. Kennedy relative to Mental Illness and Mental Retardation to the Congress.
- September 18-20, 1963 White House Conference on Mental Retardation.
- September 24, 1963 President Kennedy signed the Public Law 88-129, "The Health Professions Education Assistance Act of 1963."
- October 24, 1963 President Kennedy signed the Public Law 88-156, "The Maternal and Child Health and Mental Retardation Planning Amendments of 1963," providing \$265.2 million over five years.
- October 31, 1963 President Kennedy signed the Public Law 88-164, "The Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act of 1963," providing \$179.0 million over five years.
- December 18, 1963 President Johnson signed the Public Law 88-210, "The Vocational Education Act of 1963," which strengthens and improves the quality of vocational education, expanding vocational education opportunities in the Nation, extending the National Defense Education Act of 1958 and Public Laws 81-815 and 81-874, and for other purposes.
- February 10, 1964 President Johnson signed the Supplemental Appropriations Bill for Public Laws 88-156 and 88-164 for Fiscal Year 1964 in the amount of \$41.2 million; funds requested for grants in the President's Budget for implementation in Fiscal Year 1965 total \$80 million.
- April 10, 1964 A Directive was issued by President Johnson to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies to employ the handicapped--the qualified mentally retarded, the mentally restored and the physically impaired.
- September 4, 1964 President Johnson signed the Public Law 88-581, "The Nurse Training Act of 1964," to increase the opportunity for training professional nursing personnel.

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PUBLIC LAW 88-156, TITLE XVII

I. P L A N N I N G

In Public Law 88-156, \$2.2 million was authorized and appropriated for planning. Fifty-one of the 53 States and jurisdictions have already received, and the other two are expected to receive shortly, \$30,000 for planning a comprehensive program to combat mental retardation. In most of the States these programs are under-way, with State agencies already designated to carry out the program, with executives appointed to head them up and surveys being made to determine the individual State's needs and the priority of these needs as stipulated in the legislation.

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PUBLIC LAW 88-164, TITLE III

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II. EDUCATION

- A. Each State's educational agency was awarded grants for developing their programs for training teachers of the mentally retarded.
- B. In addition, schools, colleges, and universities in 40 of the 50 States, private as well as public institutions, numbering 218 received other grants. This money is now at work.
- C. In Section 301, as amended, the total amount awarded for training of the teachers of the handicapped is \$10,500,000, of which amount \$6,419,332 is for the training of the teachers of the mentally retarded and represents more than half the total funds appropriated during Fiscal Year 1964. (Chart 1)
- D. In Section 302, as amended, another \$1 million in grants for research and demonstration projects in the education of handicapped children was awarded, most of it for work concerned with mental retardation. (Chart 2)

This is an area that has proved particularly fertile because knowledgeable educators are demonstrating, every day, new techniques and new educational machines which are enabling the retarded to learn more, to learn more quickly and to retain more of what they learn.

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(Continued)

PUBLIC LAW 88-164

III. R E S E A R C H

Under conditions of the new legislation in Public Law 88-164, the Federal government is giving new impetus and determined leadership in research into the cause of mental retardation, methods of preventing it, and into the care of those afflicted with it.

A. Research Centers. Already two major research centers, one at Washington University in Seattle and one at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University in New York City, have been approved for multi-million dollar awards. These are now being funded in two consecutive years and will result in the construction of major research facilities to help find the causes and the means of preventing mental retardation or ameliorating its effects. The Federal government will provide \$11.3 million toward the construction of these centers, under terms of Public Law 88-164, Title I, Part A. Already \$26 million has been authorized over four years for such centers. (Chart 3)

B. University-Affiliated Centers. Universities throughout the Nation have further been stimulated to work in the field of mental retardation by Part B of Title I of Public Law 88-164, which provides for grants for construction of university-affiliated facilities for the mentally retarded. For 1964, \$5 million was appropriated and altogether, over four years, \$32.5 million has been authorized for these facilities. In Fiscal

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III. B. (continued)

Year 1964 alone, requests from universities totaled \$9 million and they are still being received at a rapid rate. These centers will provide additional help for the retarded in diagnosis and treatment, education, training and care, on the one hand, and also provide a long-range benefit by helping in the clinical training of physicians and other specialized personnel needed for research, diagnosis and treatment, education, training and care of the mentally retarded. (Chart 4)

C. PUBLIC LAW 88-164, TITLE I, PART C: CONSTRUCTION OF GENERAL FACILITIES FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED. These funds are intended for general purpose service and community facilities for the mentally retarded. Ten million dollars are to be appropriated in Fiscal Year 1965; \$67.5 million are authorized for the four years.

Since the legislation was passed, reports from the States indicate a much greater need than was suspected. (Chart 5)

PUBLIC LAW 88-156

D. Children's Bureau Programs. Public Law 88-156 provided for, among other things, funds for the Children's Bureau to assist in research in the area of mental retardation conducted by private and public agencies and educational institutions. These grants were also eagerly sought by researchers and a wide variety of projects already are under-way.

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III. D. (continued)

One dramatic accomplishment in research into discovery and treatment of conditions leading to mental retardation was announced recently by the Children's Bureau.

This project was concerned with phenylketonuria, or PKU, an inborn error of metabolism, which, if undetected and untreated, results in mental retardation.

The Children's Bureau supported this study which demonstrated that this condition is at least twice as prevalent as formerly was believed. And, even more important, it also demonstrated that a new screening method which was being tested can detect the PKU condition before a newborn infant leaves the hospital.

Because of the study alone, which involved blood tests for PKU among 400,000 babies at 505 hospitals, 39 children will be saved from a lifetime of mental retardation.

Now those 39 who were found to be victims of PKU will be able to receive special diets which will prevent excess amounts of phenylalanine from developing in the system and affecting the brain.

And now, because of this effort, the whole nation can benefit. For every newborn baby can be tested before he leaves the hospital and if PKU is detected, he can be given the special diet needed to counteract it.

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III. D. (continued)

Mrs. Katherine Oettinger, Chief of the Children's Bureau, described the development as a major breakthrough. The study, she points out, "has opened the way to simultaneous testing for other rarer forms of mental retardation caused by other inborn errors of metabolism."

PUBLIC LAW 87-838

E. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. All these developments, obviously, are in addition to the work of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development--established in January 1963--which has a continuing program of research which includes studies in mental retardation among its programs.

It has the responsibility for approximately 1,000 grants and awards which total \$26.6 million. These grants are in the area of mental retardation and such related areas as reproductive and perinatal biology, growth and development, aging, congenital malformations, developmental pharmacology, and human communication. Fifty of these grants, totaling over \$2 million, are specifically in the area of mental retardation.

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PUBLIC LAW 88-156

IV. CARE AND SERVICES

A. All State health departments are participating actively under conditions of Public Law 88-156, in programs designed to increase the services available to the retarded, to enlarge existing mental retardation clinics by adding to clinic staffs, to increase the number of clinics, and to extend the screening and treatment services now available. These are under supervision of the Children's Bureau.

B. Included among the accomplishments are the approval of seven maternity and infant care projects at a cost of \$4,718,686. Objectives are the extension of prenatal care to as many mothers as possible, to eliminate the possibility that their children will become mentally retarded solely because of the fact that they received no medical help or guidance during the prenatal and early postnatal period.

PUBLIC LAW 88-164

C. Additional services for the retarded in the individual States is planned for under Part C, Title I of Public Law 88-164 which authorized funds for the construction in the States of facilities for the mentally retarded. This money becomes available during the current fiscal year, but already the States are actively participating in this program. Over a four-year period, \$67.5 million has been authorized for this purpose.

PUBLIC LAW 88-210

V. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT

A. The Vocational Rehabilitation Administration has devoted a great amount of its energy in recent years to the development of programs for the rehabilitation of the mentally retarded. As a result, a number of wonderful achievements have been recorded which have demonstrated that perhaps as many as 85 percent of the mentally retarded, when properly trained, can hold some kind of job. They are fast being moved from the rolls of the tax-eaters to the lists of the gainfully employed who contribute to the support of the government. In Fiscal Year 1963, the Administration rehabilitated 5,900 persons. At the time they were accepted for training 92 percent of them had no income and less than one percent had earnings of \$40 or more a week. After receiving rehabilitation only seven percent had no earnings and approximately 44 percent earned \$40 or more a week. In Fiscal Year 1964, the number of mentally retarded rehabilitated and placed in jobs jumped to 7,500.

B. The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, formerly the President's Committee on the Employment of the Physically Handicapped, now devotes approximately 50 percent of its time to working for the mentally handicapped. As part of the program sponsored by the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations--of placing the mentally retarded who are certified as trained in some skill in government jobs where possible--and the Civil Service Commission has arranged for a trial period of six months for trained retardates, holding a certificate of competence from designated regular training programs, without the usual qualifying examination.

Voc. Rehab. (continued)

The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped is planning a massive program to encourage employers both in and out of government, to hire the trained mentally retarded. Part of its sales program will be the presentation of success stories and acknowledgements from employers already hiring the trained mentally retarded; stories which demonstrate that the retarded are good, willing, and loyal workers. The Labor Department and many private organizations are also active in this field.

C. Spurred by both Presidents, Kennedy and Johnson, Federal agencies began hiring the retarded in March 1964. By May, twenty-two trained mentally retarded persons had been placed. In June the number rose to 92 and by August to 154. It is only now beginning to gain momentum. Agencies throughout the Government have found that the retarded can hold some of their jobs. Today the retarded are employed in Federal programs all over the United States. The Governmental successes with the retarded is also helping convince the private sector of the merit of the retarded worker.

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VI. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

Another major undertaking of the Kennedy-Johnson Administration is a campaign for public awareness of the size of the problem of mental retardation and understanding of the nature of the problem of the mentally retarded and of how each citizen can participate in helping solve them. The Federal government, in cooperation with the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation and the Advertising Council, has been engaged for some months in drafting this mammoth campaign. Hopefully, products of this campaign will be a better understanding on the part of expectant mothers of the importance of good medical care as an aid in preventing mental retardation in their children; a realization by the public that the retarded are not mentally ill but only mentally limited and that when educated and trained to the limit of their ability, they can become useful citizens instead of expensive wards of the government. Again, here a major effort will be directed at employers, demonstrating the wide variety of jobs that the retarded do well; jobs in which they often excel because their dedication is to the job and not to the idea of getting ahead.

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VII. GROWTH OF THE FEDERAL PROGRAM FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED

Funds obligated for mental retardation programs in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare have increased from less than \$15,000,000 in Fiscal Year 1956 to an estimated \$241,407,500 in President Johnson's budget for Fiscal Year 1965. Of the Fiscal Year 1965 proposed budget, \$124,700,000 is to be used for programs of income maintenance for persons who are mentally retarded. The remaining \$116,707,500 is for the support of mental retardation programs in the areas of research, studies, demonstrations, services, training of professional personnel, construction, and planning. Increased emphasis in Fiscal Year 1965 is being given to preventive services, research, training of personnel and construction of needed facilities.

The amount does not include other departmental programs for which funds are not specifically identified; programs which, however, have an impact on the total campaign against mental retardation.



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