



Florida State Board of Health

WILSON T. SOWDER, M.D., M.P.H., STATE HEALTH OFFICER

JACKSONVILLE 1

January 28, 1953
COPY

TELEPHONE
4-0121

POST OFFICE
BOX 218

Honorable Kenneth S. Stimmell
Representative Martin County
Box 486
Stuart, Florida

Public Health

Dear Mr. Stimmell:

Reference is made to your letter of January 24. After talking to you I called Mr. Bryant in Ocala and found that he is extremely busy, and we were unable, for the time being, to agree on a date to get together. I am sure that Mr. Bryant will talk to you about this matter further when he sees you.

I am unable to send you any prepared material on the subject. Although I think that the idea is an excellent one, and I have had it in mind for several years, I am sure that you understand that this is not a responsibility of the State Board of Health. It would be very much in line with recent thinking on the subject for the state to make arrangements for the care of acute mental patients in local hospitals where psychiatrists are available. The state could pay for hospitalization on a per diem basis and pay the physician on a fee basis in much the same way that we pay for the care of cancer cases. Also the state might provide a subsidy to cities and counties for the building of psychiatric units to general hospitals for this purpose. Even without any formal arrangement such units have been built in Jacksonville and Miami and great savings to the state have resulted and better care for the patients.

As a member of the Hospital Advisory Council to the State Improvement Commission, I had the privilege of strongly advocating the use of some federal funds in the construction of the hundred bed unit at the Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. I argued that this unit would save the state a great deal of money because many patients would thereby be treated locally and at county expense. Naturally, the bigger bulk of patients at the mental hospitals are domiciliary cases and it would be too expensive to take care of them in a hospital. A plan might be worked out, however, to pay for the care of some of these in city or county nursing homes or even private nursing homes. As you know, an alternative plan is being considered whereby the state would decentralize its mental institutions and continue to operate them at state expense.

If I can help you any further in any way I should be glad to do so.

Sincerely yours,

Wilson T. Sowder, M. D.
State Health Officer

WTS:ad
cc: Mr. Bryant