

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

Washington 25, D. C.

May 4, 1960

MEMORANDUM

To: Members, Executive Committee

From: Executive Secretary
President's Committee

Subject: Report of Staff Activity on May 6, 1959 Executive Committee Decision
Regarding Increased Interest in Mentally & Emotionally Handicapped

At the meeting of the Executive Committee last year prior to the Annual Meeting, a special Ad Hoc Committee on the Mentally Handicapped reported its recommendations which were accepted. Summarized, the recommendations were substantially included in the last paragraph which read:

While the Ad Hoc Committee is convinced, for these reasons and others, that a start must now be made in the direction of aiding the mentally handicapped, we believe that the President's Committee should proceed with caution so as to avoid jeopardizing any of the benefits which we have won through the years. We would prefer, for example, to see our efforts enlarged without any change in our basic legislation, and without public announcement of our enlarged objectives, at least until after further experience has been developed in the new field.

Subsequently, the Executive Committee adopted the following resolution:

"The Executive Committee, noting the growing importance of employment of persons with histories of emotional or behavior problems requiring special placement efforts, and further noting steps being taken by State Committees, hereby endorses an immediate and detailed study of the problem of incorporating promotional responsibility for aiding the employment of such persons."

On November 16, 1959 and again on February 15, 1960, I reported, as directed, to the Executive Committee progress in two areas: (1) informal study efforts of the problem which included contacts with knowledgeable professionals, and (2) minimum efforts to "proceed with caution" in calling the problem to the attention of the public without fanfare or major shift of emphasis.

Now, after a year in which to consider and "study" the problem and after further opportunities to discuss it with responsible persons from many States and many national organizations, I believe the time is right for final recommendations on which the Executive Committee can base decisions.

Recent personal activities have included attendance for several days at the White House Conference on Children and Youth as a member of a discussion group on mentally handicapped children and an evening with a graduate school class in public relations at American University during which the problem in all its promotional implications was reviewed with alert young minds.

It is worth noting that this report was prepared prior to the meeting of Dr. Collins' Subcommittee on the Emotionally Restored, the Medical Committee meeting, or before reports from either the Advisory Council Ad Hoc Committee or the Employer Committee which latter, incidentally, is waiting for the report of the Medical Committee before giving its considered opinion. I, therefore, do not have the benefit of the advice and guidance which it was intended that I should have, since some of these meetings have unavoidably either been postponed or held up to achieve peak attendance this week.

Notwithstanding the above, the following is my report and recommendation:

Report: Neither funds nor staff time have been available for what normally would be considered a "study." However, the matter has been studied carefully and with full weight given to all the possible plus and minus factors.

It thus appears quite apparent that to further avoid decision would create an even greater vacuum in the present national effort to employ or reemploy mentally handicapped persons. This need is so great that it is obvious that responsibility should be accepted provisionally for a period of one year during which we might further "proceed with caution."

Recommendation: That the President's Committee quietly but efficiently "without any change in our basic legislation and without public announcement of our enlarged objectives," take steps to aid the employment of the mentally handicapped on a pilot basis for the next 12 months, taking due care to keep any such promotional campaign generally separate from our normal efforts for the physically handicapped.

Further, if our ceiling is raised, it is my intention to recommend to the Chairman a modest budget which will provide for one executive and a secretary to concentrate on this pilot project.

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Attachment C

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE EMOTIONALLY RESTORED

The Subcommittee on the Emotionally Restored met for the first time in the Willard Hotel, Washington, D. C., May 3, 1960. The following members were present:

Ralph T. Collins, M.D., CHAIRMAN
Consultant in Neurology and
Psychiatry
Eastman Kodak Company
343 State Street
Rochester 4, New York

Rives Chalmers, M.D.
Medical Consultant
State Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation
129 State Office Building
Atlanta 3, Georgia (Consultant)

Edward C. Holmblad, M.D.
Medical Director
Illinois Public Aid Commission
160 North LaSalle Street
Chicago 1, Illinois (ex officio)

William P. McCahill, Exec. Sec.
The President's Committee on Employ-
ment of the Physically Handicapped
Washington 25, D. C. (Consultant)

Vincent P. Hippolitus, SECRETARY
Director of Field Operations
The President's Committee on Employment
of the Physically Handicapped
Washington 25, D. C.

John McIver, M.D.
Assistant Medical Director
United States Steel Corp.
525 William Penn Place
Pittsburgh 30, Pennsylvania

S. D. Steiner, Corp. Med. Dir.
General Motors Corporation
General Motors Building
3044 West Grand Boulevard
Detroit 2, Michigan

Robert D. Wright, M.D.
Asst. Dir., Health & Medical Activities
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Department of Health, Education, and
Welfare
Washington 25, D. C. (Consultant)

Committee decisions were as follows:

1. The mentally restored and the mentally retarded should be included in the philosophy and the program of the President's Committee. The emphasis might well be placed on the mentally restored as these, by and large, are more employable, educable, and trainable. Also, there are many agencies, voluntary and others, who are working with the mentally retarded up to the age of 18.
2. There is discrimination against the mentally restored relative to employment and reemployment. This is a manpower problem and a humane one as well.

Attachment C (Cont.)

3. The gathering of data pertaining to this subject, the constant suggesting to Governors' Committees and grassroots local Mayors' Committees that attention be paid to this subject, and the "cautious approach" and the "deliberate speed" attitude, are recommended.
4. Suitable articles regarding this subject might be published in PERFORMANCE and NEPH pamphlets. We agreed that there is much education to be done at all levels of management, among the work force, within unions and the medical profession, including, of course, the psychiatrists and the mental hospitals.
5. We agreed that more effective communication should be developed between the psychiatrist, the plant physician, and the supervisors, all working toward the welfare and benefit of the employee and eventually the industry.
6. We agreed that although each case must always be individualized on a face-to-face and fact-to-fact basis, and that motivation of each mentally restored employee must be considered, this is of no avail unless top management has decided that the handicapped shall be employed and that all levels of management be so appraised and educated to the belief that "it really pays to hire the handicapped."
7. We agreed that the President's Committee can aid the mentally restored and the mentally retarded in its informational, educational, and promotional programs. We recommend that the President's Committee include these workers in its overall program.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph T. Collins, M.D.