

ADDRESS, MARYLAND STATE CONFERENCE
OF SOCIAL WELFARE
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

November 16, 1961

One of the really rewarding experiences of holding public office is to watch significant progress being made in some area of public endeavor, and it has been both gratifying and heartwarming to me to observe the great advancements we have been making in Maryland in the care and treatment of our mentally ill. You have an expert here today to address you on the subject of mental hygiene—in Dr. Leo Bartemeier, whom I had the honor of appointing to our recently created Board of Health and Mental Hygiene. And so, I will not usurp your time by discussing in detail a topic about which I have a limited knowledge.

Briefly, however, since we are interested here in "Action for Mental Health," I should like to cite some of the activities in this area which I believe show strongly and clearly that Maryland is alert to the need of developing a comprehensive and effective program for the treatment of mental illness. For the first time in its history, the Department of Mental Hygiene is participating in the development of community mental health projects. Funds were appropriated at this year's regular session of the General Assembly for the establishment, on a state-and-local matching-fund basis, of day care centers for the mentally retarded and the mentally ill.

One of the glaring defects of our overall mental hygiene program has been the absence of adequate community health services, and a primary objective of the new program will be to improve these services by helping to develop additional general purpose mental health clinics, and special clinics for children, alcoholics and other groups requiring highly skilled personnel. Our program also contemplates the expansion of psychiatric units in general hospitals, follow-up clinics for ex-hospital patients, sheltered workshops, half-way houses and school guidance centers, as well as the day-care centers. Increases in the salaries of physicians, psychiatrists and other psychiatric personnel have made it possible for our hospitals to employ better qualified professionals, the result of which has been that they are now better able to carry on their programs of intensive treatment.

In addition, significant steps have been taken in the establishment of an excellent system of research in our mental institutions. Research units have been established officially in all of our six State mental hospitals. The position of Director of Research has been created in the