

institutions, and into all matters relating to their maintenance, conduct and management, for such purpose or purposes any members of said Board shall have free access to the grounds, buildings, equipment and appurtenances and all books and papers relating to patients confined in any such institution, or institutions, and to said patients themselves. All persons connected with any such institution shall give such information and afford such facilities for any such examination or inquiry as the Board or its Chairman may require. The Board shall encourage scientific investigations by the medical staffs of the various institutions under its supervision, and to this end may, in its discretion, publish from time to time bulletins and reports of the scientific and business work done therein, and may prescribe to the superintendent and managers of the several institutions under its supervision the forms of and periods covered by the statistical returns to be made by them in their annual report to the Board. The Chairman, or at least one member of the Board appointed for the purpose by the Board, shall visit all public, corporate and private institutions, almshouses or county asylums where the insane or feeble-minded are kept, at least once in every six months. The Board of Mental Hygiene shall ascertain by actual examination or inquiry through its Chairman whether the laws relating to the persons in custody in said institution and to those in control thereof are properly observed, shall give such directions as will insure correctness in the returns required relative to them, and may use such means as may be necessary to collect all desired information. Such visits shall be made on such days and such hours of the day or night, and for such length of time as the visitor may choose. The official visitor shall carefully inspect every part of the institution visited in reference to its cleanliness and sanitary conditions, the number of patients in seclusion or restraint, the dietary and treatment of the patients, and any other matters the Board may consider necessary. The Board, or its Chairman, shall from time to time make an example of all the records and methods of administration as relate to patients, the general and special dietary and treatment of any patients confined therein, especially where admitted since the preceding visit, giving such as may desire it suitable opportunity to converse with the visitors privately.

An. Code, sec. 20. 1904, sec. 20. 1888, sec. 20. 1886, ch. 487, sec. 21.

20. If in their judgment any person confined in any institution in this State as insane be not insane, the Board may, at any time, bring the matter to the attention of the state's attorney of Baltimore city, or the state's attorney of any of the respective counties of the State, whose duty it shall be to apply to the proper tribunal for the writ of *habeas corpus*, to the end that proper inquiry and investigation may be had at once as to the mental condition of such person; and if the court shall be of the opinion that such person is not insane, then the court shall discharge such person; but if the court shall determine that such person is insane, then the court shall order that such person be returned to the institution from which he has been taken under said writ of *habeas corpus*.