

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 16, 1963

PAUL HOCH DIES, MENTAL CHIEF, 62

State Commissioner 9 Years
—Schizophrenia Expert

ALBANY, Dec. 15 (AP)—Dr. Paul H. Hoch, State Commissioner of Mental Hygiene, collapsed and died at his home here tonight. He was 62 years old.

Dr. Hoch was appointed commissioner on July 7, 1955, by Gov. Averell Harriman and was reappointed by Governor Rockefeller.

Courteous and Cool

To cope with the problems of the state's mentally ill—overcrowding, skimpy facilities and finances, personnel shortages and the traditional indifference of the public—Paul Hoch brought a continental courtesy and coolness and the thorough-

ness of a research psychiatrist for making you feel understood."

Governor Rockefeller last night described Dr. Hoch as a "wonderfully warm, understanding human being," deeply dedicated to the cause of public psychiatry.

When Dr. Hoch moved into the Commissioner's chair in 1955, he was well aware of the vast problems in the mental health program. But he carefully avoided "pie-in-the-sky" proposals.

He once noted that many new and elaborate mental health programs were unrealistic. He questioned the wisdom of seeking to double or triple present mental health budgets without a realistic consideration of where the funds would come from.

"Planning for services without planning for financing is not planning at all," he said. "It is wishful thinking."

He also frequently questioned where the trained personnel were to come from for expanded mental health programs. In his rich Hungarian accent he once said:

"Do we want a psychiatric comfort station on every corner where everyone may receive a half-baked concoction of sympathy and chemical tranquility—and no one receive treatment?"

Reduced Hospital Patients

If Dr. Hoch was baffled by anything in his job, it was the amazing ways of red tape. He

research aspects of mental health.

During Dr. Hoch's nine years as Mental Health Commissioner, the number of persons in the state's mental hospitals was reduced. He was quick to attribute this to new drugs, just as others attributed it in large part to his drive.

Dr. Hoch, who was born in Budapest in 1902, came to the United States in 1933 with a solid European education and training. He received his medical training at the University of Göttingen in Germany, did psychiatric work in Zurich and then moved on to the neuro-psychiatric clinic at Göttingen.

He was chief medical officer of the Hospital for War Neuroses at Gladstone, N. J., in 1942. Later he went to the New York Psychiatric Institute, the state's model research center, and was placed in charge of its department of experimental psychiatry in 1948.

His special interest was in the field of schizophrenia and in the relationship between new tranquility drugs and psychotherapy. He wrote more than 150 papers that were published in scientific journals. He was also professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Dr. Hoch, a cigar smoker who knew five languages, married Barbara Griffiths of Brooklyn in 1960. Their engagement announcement was made quite simple in the fall issue of Mental Hygiene. It announced that Miss Griffiths was resigning as director of the department's volunteer services. At the very end it said she was to be married to Dr. Hoch.