

Apathy is a major problem

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tried to put 80 guys in private motel rooms instead of barracks.

We'll try to make the living quarters as close to the way you and I would want them. You wouldn't want to sleep in a room with 80 girls, right? You'd probably prefer a private room. But if not, you'd settle for two or four in a room. You'd like to have some pictures on the walls. You'd like to have some decent furniture. You'd like to have privacy in the washroom—that's the type of thing I'm talking about.

You've got to get the people on the staff interested in their jobs, which means interested in the residents. You've got to get some kind of a system where they see some improvement, which encourages them to do better work. Then we'll see some changes. The staff has got to be attended to. You can't sit up here in this office and meet with one or two people and look at papers and expect to improve things.

Q: Has your professional experience been in mental health treatment or management?

A: Mental health administration. I've been in it all my life, almost. I started out as a teacher, originally. After teaching in public schools for a short time, I worked in Illinois in a large department that had many services including mental health. I was a teacher in a rehabilitation center for the blind, which was a relatively small facility where we were able to give individual instruction.

And from that place, they decided to try to promote a clinical person to an administrative job, which is how I got into this business in the first place. I became business manager at the rehabilitation center and then went to graduate school in hospital administration.

In that system, when you

move to a larger facility, they're usually mental health facilities.

So I moved up the business route in the state mental health system.

After that I went to D.C. General in Washington—I was only there a few months when I was asked to come back to Illinois to help staff, plan and build a new mental health facility—which I did, and I was ready to leave again.

They asked me what they could do to keep me in Illinois. I was told they could make me a superintendent, which is what a director is called there. I thought they wouldn't do it, and that I could leave gracefully. But they called my bluff.

In Illinois we developed two different programs for the mentally retarded. They involved the building of new smaller retardation

facilities. We brought in staff and residents from the big state facilities, approximately 100 at a time. We trained the staff, and then that staff and the residents became the new facility. We went that cycle twice.

Q: How are your relations with parent groups so far?

A: I have met them and intend to work as closely with them as we can. I would hope to get them to join us rather than oppose us in what we're trying to do. To do that I think we need to establish better lines of communication with them, so that we don't do things that they only find out about later. If we have plans we will discuss them openly and honestly with them. We will give them our rationale and hopefully gain their support rather than their opposition.