

Aid to Dependent Children Plan Misunderstood, Group Says

(Editor's note: This is another in a series of articles discussing the recommendations of the Governor's Committee on Children and Youth. The committee recently completed a two-year study. The articles are written by Ann Sullivan, long-time Oregon reporter.)

By ANN SULLIVAN

The aid to dependent children program in Oregon, more than any other public assistance activity, is widely misunderstood, commonly misrepresented and unjustifiably criticized, according to the newly released report of the Governor's Committee on Children and Youth.

"This current trend in Oregon as well as in other states," the report states, "is unfortunate and alarming in that it threatens the existence of a program which affects more children at the formative years of life than any other public assistance activity."

Purpose of the ADC program, which receives sizeable federal support to match that of state and counties, is to provide financial assistance, medical care and social services to children up to 18 years of age who are deprived of parental care and support because of the death, absence or incapacity of one or both parents.

Assistance to 16,566 The report notes that Oregon in April, 1959, granted assistance to 16,566 children under the ADC program. These children lived in 6,240 families comprising 5,505 adults who received financial aid under the program. The total expenditure was slightly in excess of \$873,000, with the average family grant \$140 a month and the monthly individual payment \$39.58.

Oregon's ratio of children on ADC per 1,000 of population under 18 was relatively low at 24 per 1,000 children compared to a national average of 34 per 1,000; California with 37 per 1,000 and Washington with 31 per 1,000.

(Miss Jeanne Jewett, Oregon state public welfare administrator, in television answer to an inquiry on the number of illegitimate children on ADC roles, reported that at the current time, they number only 1,105, or 7 per cent of the monthly average of 16,000 children.)

Some shortcomings of the ADC program are outlined in the report.

"Insufficient funds," it states, "result in disadvantageous treatment of children on the program."

The report mentions the practice in Oregon, pursuing a policy followed since 1953, to remove children of both sexes, 14 years of age or older, from ADC rolls during the summer to encourage them to find employment.

"How many youngsters succeed in finding jobs which will pay an income higher than an assistance grant is open to question," the report states. The blanket curtailment is intended to conserve welfare funds and encourage children to derive benefits of paid employment.

"But these, too, are questionable objectives since families are known to incur debts when assistance grants are reduced. Children, some of them entering the labor markets for the first time, find

themselves burdened with a singular responsibility more portentous than many can bear."

Discriminatory Treatment
The report notes that there is discriminatory treatment in the amount of assistance given the dependent child and the adult in the family, contrasted with the aid standards under old age assistance.

"An elderly couple on OAA receives a total of \$64 for food alone. Under ADC, for a family of two - an adult and a child - the minimum food grant is \$43.25 and the maximum \$57.75 according to the child's age. (Top figure is allowed in family with heavier teenager.)"

The committee suggests that ADC regulations on eligibility cause some family breakdown because funds cannot be granted children of a

jobless worker unless he leaves the household.

The committee tells critics of the ADC program, who advocate foster care as a solution to charges of immorality, that it costs \$60 a month of state and county funds for foster care for one child and only \$20 of these funds for ADC.

Matching Funds
Federal matching funds pay the balance of the \$40 average monthly cost for a child on ADC.

Recommendations of the committee:
1. That the Interim Committee on Public Welfare avail itself of the services of the Governor's Committee on Children and Youth in its study of public welfare programs.

2. That federal matching funds for adults in the ADC

program be increased to the same level as in the old age assistance program.

3. That the policy of the state public welfare commission of removing children from the ADC rolls during the summer be re-evaluated.

4. That the Social Security act be amended to provide federal aid for assistance to needy children regardless of the cause of need.

5. That Congress appropriate federal funds for vital research on social problems among ADC families as well as to authorize training grants to increase the supply of social workers.

Intensify Services
6. That the state public welfare commission intensify its emphasis on services to children through educational leaves, inservice training, and better supervision of staff to

make possible a more effective job in the rehabilitating of families with chronic de-

pendency problems.

7. That family counseling and family life education pro-

grams should be made available to ADC families, a community responsibility not to be confined to public agencies alone.

provided with the facts about the ADC program to counteract the negative image which has been created.

9. That a change in eligibility laws for "stateless" per-

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sons be given serious consideration by the interim committee.

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Drug for Mental Depression Helps Other Ailments

New York, (Science Service)—Many disorders closely identified with a patient's mental attitude appear to be helped by a drug originally aimed at the mentally depressed, it was reported here today.

Angina, arthritis, asthmatic bronchitis and gastrointestinal distress were just a few of the diseases which Dr. Walter L. Evans of St. Clare's Hospital here found responsive to doses of Nardil. His report appears in today's issue of the New York State Medical Journal.

Nardil, Dr. Evans said, appears to enable the patient to usefully channel his capacity for positive aggressive action, diverting his energy outward rather than into psychosomatic channels. Certain people seem to have the capacity to channel conflict into some target area like the musculoskeletal system, with the result that the biochemical processes producing arthritis are thrown into gear.

Severe Depression
Another individual, facing a similar situation, might develop a severe depression, while still another could develop asthmatic bronchitis or angina pectoris, he explained. The drug also proved effective in treating cases of bur- sive, neuritis, herniated spinal disk, relapsing pancreatitis, high blood pressure and fibrositis, or muscular rheumatism.