Outpatient Clinic For Mental Patients May Be Reality In Near Future

By PAUL W. HARVEY JR.

SALEM (AP) — The old dream of Dr. Charlie Bates of running an outpatient clinic to treat mentally ill persons is about to come true. And it is one of the biggest developments in the care and treatment of the mentally ill in recent years.

Dr. C. E. Bates, superintendent of the Oregon State Hospital in Salem, has believed for a long time that state mental hospitals are doing only a part of their job. They are pretty effective when it comes to providing care and treatment of persons who are committed to the hospital.

But the trouble is that by the time a patient enters the state hospital at Salem or Pendleton, his mental troubles often are so far advanced that his treatment takes a long time, or he can't be cured at all.

The dream of Dr. Bates has been to provide outpatient service for persons who are in the early stages of mental illness, or who are neurotic.

This service, he thinks, will pay big dividends, as treatment in the early stages is much more effective and costs only a fraction as much as treatment later on.

Despite of the opposition of some private psychiatrists, the outpatient service for the hospitals at Salem and Pendleton, as well as the Fairview Home for mentally deficient persons, was approved by the Legislature.

It will go into effect this summer. The outpatient service at the state hospital in Salem will be operated by a psychiatrist, nurse, social worker, and a clerk. A similar setup probably will exist at Pendleton.

When a person needs treatment at an outpatient clinic, he will be referred to one of the two clinics by his doctor or the county health officer.

The patient might go to the state hospital once a week. He could be given a series of electric shock treatments, drugs or psychiatric counselling.

The big advantage is that the patient wouldn't have to lose much time from his job, and this fact would encourage many persons to get help before it is too late.

At Fairview Home, the problem is different. At its outpatient clinic, there will be held about once a month, there will be diagnoses of mental deficiency, as well as courses for parents of mentally deficient children. These parents will be taught how to care for their children, so that they might not have to be sent to Fairview.

Dr. Bates, who has only a year and a half before he retires, also has another dream, which he thinks will be approved some day, probably not while he's working for the state.

His other dream is to have traveling teams of psychiatrists and clinics all over the state. These clinics would be held at regular times in offices of county health officers.

A weakness of the present system is that, because of the critical shortage of psychiatrists, there is virtually no treatment of mental illness offered outside of Portland, Salem, Pendleton, Eugene and Roseburg. Even with the outpatient service, people in the other communities will still have to go to one of those five cities for treatment.

Dr. Bates asked the board of Control to approve this idea of treating mental illness in the small cities over the state, but the board wouldn't go for it. It sounded too much like "socialized medicine" to the board, and the private psychiatrists complained that it would cut into their practice.

Admissions to mental hospitals all over the country are increasing rapidly, and now are 16 per cent above what they were a year ago.

Dr. Bates says that doesn't mean that mental illness is increased. But what it does mean is that more and more people are taking advantage of the treatment that is offered.

In spite of the big increase in new admissions to the state hospitals, the total number of patients in the hospitals at any one time remains about stationary.

New and improved treatments are keeping pace with the influx of patients. The state hospital in Salem gets 200 new patients every month, but it discharges that many, too.

What makes Dr. Bates most proud is that 43 per cent of the new patients come to the hospital voluntarily. He thinks this proves that people are rapidly losing their fear of going to the state hospital.

The outpatient service probably will reduce the number of people who have to be committed to the hospitals at Salem and Pendleton.

Dr. Bates says he's going to start the new service on a small scale so he can feel his way along. But don't be surprised if it grows into something big.

Guards Foil Prison Break

EL RENO, Okla. (AP) —Guards opened fire on nine prisoners who made a desperate break from the federal reformatory here Wednesday, killing one and wounding two others.

All were rounded up within an hour after they climbed over a fence which separated the recreation field from the outside world, Warden W. H. Hardwick reported.

The dead prisoner was identified as Raymond Sanford Craig, 23-year-old Mayaville, Mo., convict imprisoned April 2 on an 18-month sentence for transporting a stolen vehicle across state lines.

Without warning, the prisoners broke from the playground area and ran toward a 12-foot fence which separates the yard from the rest of the reservation, Hardwick said, adding:

"They immediately opened fire. Craig was killed as he climbed the fence. The two others were wounded while attempting to scale the fence too."

High Power Line Fatal For Three

YOUNGSTOWN, O. (AP) —A dangling wire of a new line Ohio Edison Co. workers were installing near here touched a high-voltage line and carried death to three of them and critical burns to two others Wednesday.

Ohio Edison Co. officials said the men were standing on the ground pulling a new wire across the cross arm of a pole when the line sagged or was blown against one of two 4,800-volt live wires. The electricity surged through the uninsulated wire the men held in their hands.

BUDGET OK

ROSEBURG (AP)—A school budget of $2,092,000 was approved by voters, unofficial returns showed Wednesday. The grade school budget was $215,949 above the 6 per cent limitation, the high school budget $101,279 above the limitation.

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