

One Hundred And Thirtieth
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

**South Carolina State
Hospital**

FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1953



Printed Under the Direction of the
State Budget and Control Board

REPORT OF SOUTH CAROLINA MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

Columbia, S. C., July 1, 1953

*To His Excellency, James F. Byrnes,
Governor of South Carolina:*

The South Carolina Mental Health Commission, (the Board of Regents) of the S. C. State Hospital, submits herewith to you and to the General Assembly its One Hundred and Thirtieth Report, for the fiscal year 1952-1953.

This year was a year of growth and progress for the S. C. State Hospital. Chiefly as the fruit of your interest in the State's mental health program and as a result of your recommendations, the General Assembly appropriated \$5,000,000 for the fiscal year 1952-1953 for permanent improvements at the State Hospital and the State Training School. The greater portion of this amount of necessity has been spent where the need was greatest—at the State Hospital.

Out of these funds there is being constructed four magnificent buildings at the Columbia Division of the hospital for the care and treatment of acutely disturbed patients, a new central kitchen and bakery, together with additional refrigeration facilities to replace the inadequate central kitchen, justly condemned along with the infamous Taylor Building, in which male disturbed patients are still housed, by the Joint Committee on Mental Health in its report to you.

These four new ward buildings which will have bed space for 608 patients, are the first buildings ever constructed at the State Hospital, designed especially to care for acutely disturbed patients. They represent the latest in modern design and are a credit to the institution.

So, also, is the central kitchen and bakery which will make it possible for the hospital, almost for the first time in modern history, to supply the patients with attractively prepared as well as nutritious meals. This will be a show place for the institution and is probably not to be matched at any other state hospital in the United States.

In addition, Building No. 1 at the State Park Division has been completely renovated and has been converted into an attractive dormitory for patients. This work was done by the

hospital's maintenance staff at a cost just about half the amount that would have been required had it been done on contract. Other and less extensive renovations are also being undertaken at Buildings 2, 3 and 8 at State Park, these, too, by the hospital's maintenance staff.

The remainder of the \$5,000,000, less that portion allocated for permanent improvements at the State Training School at Clinton, is being used to enlarge the central heating plant at the Columbia Division in order to provide heat and hot water for these additional buildings and others needed and planned when the money may be made available.

The completion of these projects, although they grant relief in the two worst areas of the institution, will not complete the work needed to make the State Hospital the institution that South Carolina must wish to see it. No institution which has been neglected as the State Hospital has been and which has deteriorated to the extent that it has been allowed to deteriorate can be converted into a modern institution simply by providing 608 beds for acutely disturbed patients. The hospital now houses 5,545 patients. Even when these new buildings are occupied it will remain a woefully overcrowded and dilapidated institution generally.

This \$5,000,000 appropriation must, therefore, be considered only a beginning. The needs of the hospital are for more bed space for patients, adequate recreational facilities, a medical and surgical hospital and additional active treatment facilities at the Columbia Division.

Appropriations should be made next year for additional ward buildings at both Columbia and the State Park Divisions for recreation buildings at both divisions and for a medical and surgical building.

Mentally ill people suffer from all the other ailments and mis-haps common to man and all deserve and need competent treatment in a building designed as a medical and surgical hospital. The present State Hospital medical and surgical wards are merely make-shifts and are woefully inadequate.

Annual admissions are approaching the 2,200 mark. The educational work that has been done in the field of mental illness is making possible the earlier recognition of the symptoms of mental disease and more and more the people of South Carolina

are seeking treatment in the State Hospital in the earlier stages of the disease when the prognosis is good. Even though the active treatment areas of the hospital are inadequate to take care of this new patient load, the number of annual discharges is increasing in just about the same proportion that admissions are rising. Deaths in the hospital have been steadily declining.

These developments are encouraging. Mental illness, discovered too late, is for all practical purposes incurable even though the mentally ill person may live on for years in the hospital. Some way to avoid this inexcusable economic waste should be found. And the only way it can be found is to enlarge the active treatment areas of the hospital.

The personnel problems of the hospital remain unsolved for lack of money. The medical staff of the hospital has been enlarged but it still falls short of meeting the standards of the American Psychiatric Association in every category. Salaries must be increased to a point where the hospital can attract physicians and others to its staff.

The enactment of the new Mental Health Code after the passage of the Appropriation Act of 1952 created something of a crisis for the Commission, required by law to begin its operation and to assume activities and duties for which no money was appropriated.

Through the cooperation of the State Budget and Control Board the Commission was enabled, however, to begin operation on a make-shift basis with a skeleton force, using \$28,000 which had been appropriated for similar purposes.

The Commission is now operating three Mental Health Clinics—at Charleston, Greenville and Spartanburg—and personnel and funds are available for the activation of a fourth clinic at Columbia early in the next year. These clinics represent South Carolina's major effort in the area of mental disease prevention and are, in many ways, the most important element in the Commission's endeavor to curtail the economic and human waste involved in mental disease when it reaches the chronic stage.

Dr. W. P. Beckman, who had been serving both as Superintendent of the hospital and for a short period as State Director of Mental Health, took over the full time duties of the State Directorship and Dr. William S. Hall, heretofore Clinical Director, was named as Superintendent of the hospital. Named as

Clinical Director for the State Park Division was Dr. Sol B. McLendon, who is also acting as Clinical Director for the Columbia Division. The vacancy at the Columbia Division will be filled.

To the Governor, the General Assembly and to many other State departments and agencies, the Commission owes its thanks for services generously given. To the employees of the Commission's Central Offices, the State Hospital and the State Training School, it offers its appreciation for a job well done under trying circumstances.

Respectfully submitted,

G. A. BUCHANAN, JR., *Chairman*

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South Carolina Mental Health Com-