

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

MAINE
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
COMMITTEE

REPORT
TO
NINETY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
AT STATE MENTAL INSTITUTIONS

PUBLICATION NO. 98-5

OCTOBER, 1957

STATE OF OF MAINE
S U M M A R Y R E P O R T
t o
NINETY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

From the Senate:

Miles F. Carpenter, Skowhegan, Vice Chairman
William R. Cole, Liberty
Earl W. Davis, Harrison
Alton A. Lessard, Lewiston
Clarence W. Parker, Sebec
Norman R. Rogerson, Houlton
J. Hollis Wyman, Milbridge

From the House:

Rodney E. Ross, Jr., Bath, Chairman
Harold Bragdon, Perham
Dana W. Childs, Portland
Lucia M. Cormier, Rumford
Albert W. Emmons, Kennebunk
Robert W. Maxwell, Winthrop
Robert G. Wade, Auburn

Ex Officio:

Joseph T. Edgar, Bar Harbor,
Speaker of the House
Robert N. Haskell, Bangor,
President of the Senate

Director:

Samuel H. Slosberg, Gardiner

Assistant Director:

Samuel S. Silsby, Jr., Augusta

October, 1957

To the Members of the 98th Legislature:

The Legislative Research Committee has the pleasure of submitting herewith its preliminary report on employee recruitment and retention at state mental institutions.

The report presents a summary of the initial findings of the Committee with specific recommendations. The final report in connection with this assigned study will be made to the 99th Legislature.

It is the hope of the Committee that the information herein contained will be of service to the Members of the 98th Legislature.

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

By: Rodney E. Ross, Jr.
Chairman.

EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

AT STATE MENTAL INSTITUTIONS

ORDERED, the Senate concurring, that the Legislative Research Committee be directed to study the problem of recruiting and retaining employees in the mental institutions of the State with particular emphasis on Pineland Hospital and Training Center. The Committee is further directed to report its findings to the 99th Legislative Session or to a Special Session of the 93th Legislature if such be called.

INVESTIGATION

The Legislative Research Committee under this directive of the 98th Legislature has studied the problem of employee recruitment and retention at the state mental institutions.

The Committee, as an initial phase of its study, conducted a public hearing on July 16, 1957, and for the purpose of stimulating informed participation, invited certain interested persons to attend. The following persons appeared before the Committee in the order listed and were given full opportunity to present their views:

Dr. Peter W. Bowman, Superintendent, Pineland Hospital and Training Center;

Mrs. Ronald Levenson, President, Maine State Association for Retarded Children;

Mrs. Linwood Brown, Member, Maine State Association for Retarded Children;

Mrs. Minnie E.C. Knapp, State Representative, Yarmouth, and also Pharmacist at Pineland Hospital and Training Center;

Mr. A. J. Pappanikou, Recreational Director, Pineland Hospital and Training Center, also Chairman, Pineland Hospital and Training Center Committee on Recruiting Problems;

Mr. Stephen J. Meyers, President, Pineland Hospital and Training Center Employees Association, also Maintenance Engineer, Pineland Hospital and Training Center;

Mr. Fred J. Downing, Executive Secretary, Maine State Employees Association;

Mr. Freeman Atherton, President, Pineland Parents and Associates;

Miss Ann Sawyer, Representative, Maine League of Women Voters;

Dr. Harold A. Pooler, Superintendent, Bangor State Hospital;
Dr. Francis H. Sleeper, Superintendent, Augusta State Hospital; and
Mr. Norman U. Greenlaw, Commissioner of Institutional Service.

On August 13, 1957, Mr. Ober C. Vaughan, Director of Personnel, at its invitation, appeared before the Committee in executive session.

Following the first two meetings of the Committee, conferences were held on two separate dates, the first on September 18, 1957 between Chairman Ross and Mr. Ober C. Vaughan; the second on October 1, 1957 between Chairman Ross, Commissioner Greenlaw, Mr. Ober C. Vaughan and Mr. Willard R. Harris of the Department of Personnel.

The Committee, on August 13, 1957, voted that a Subcommittee be appointed to investigate housing and transportation facilities at Pineland Hospital and Training Center. The Subcommittee, consisting of Chairman Ross, Senator Davis and Representative Childs, made its investigation on September 27, 1957, reporting its findings at the regular meeting of the Committee on October 8, 1957.

The final meeting relative to the study was held on October 3, 1957 for the purpose of reviewing data and preparing this report.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee, having studied and received testimony upon the employee retention and recruitment problem at the state mental institutions, recognizes that manpower shortages exist in the mental health field as in professional and non-professional

work in all areas of employment. The Committee believes that in view of the new salary schedule enacted during the regular session of the 98th Legislature and the brief lapse of time since the effective date of the schedule on July 1, 1957, that the present study cannot properly evaluate the effect of the salary increases on mental employee recruitment and retention. The present report, the Committee feels, should be a preliminary one, generally devoted to the more apparent inequities currently existing; its final report to be made to the 99th Legislature based upon further study and a more thorough analysis of those factors having a long-range effect. The Committee has once before studied the matter of institutions, its study, independently initiated, appearing in its Fourth Report to the Ninety-Seventh Legislature (January, 1955). As true now as it was then, retention and recruitment was a problem, and in the foreseeable future with a projection of current conditions and demands will conceivably still be one despite increased financial incentives and improved facilities. The factors and conditions responsible for this situation are not easily identified, and the measures for their remedy even less apparent. Obviously, manpower in mental health is a problem today, and it is evident that the problem is not peculiar to Maine alone. State mental institutions throughout the country have been plagued for years with general manpower shortages, and in consequence, have often been forced to employ persons with qualifications barely meeting the minimum standards. Even lower standards have not resulted in securing adequate numbers of necessary employees. Expanded progress in mental health services

and continued protection and improvement of the mental health of the people of this State will require increasing numbers of personnel to offset current and future needs. In securing adequate numbers of personnel, quality in the various service categories must be improved. With respect to current state salary schedules, a comparative analysis made by the Department of Personnel indicates in many classifications the pay in Maine is comparable to or higher than in similar categories in New Hampshire and Vermont. In certain instances, the differential is slight and will be offset by the general 4 1/2% salary increase effective July 1, 1958. The salary problem seems particularly serious in the lower personnel classifications where differentials ranging from 6 to 25 per cent exist between similar classifications in our neighboring states. This situation is alleviated apparently in some degree if rates for employee room and board at the mental institutions are considered. Where unjustifiable inequities in pay exist, the Committee feels immediate attention should be given to financial adjustment by the Personnel Board.

The Committee, in its tentative study of alleged employee conditions at Pineland Hospital and Training Center, has not been convinced that such conditions are substantially different from those currently prevalent at the Augusta and Bangor State Hospitals. The locations of the Augusta and Bangor State Hospitals, in close proximity as each is to labor markets, are decidedly advantageous in respect to recruitment; the effect of location upon retention does not appear to materially differ among each of the three institutions. Evidence taken by the Committee is not indicative

that the location of Pineland Hospital and Training Center imposes a disproportionate burden upon its employees in terms of housing, transportation and educational facilities. Conditions of employment at each of the three mental institutions appear sufficiently comparable, and do not, in the opinion of the Committee, indicate a present necessity for establishing salary differentials and special concessions for mental health employees based solely upon reasons of inconvenience.

The Committee believes that in fulfilling its present assignment, limited but positive recommendations should be made relating to the problems of employee recruitment and retention at the state mental institutions. The Committee, therefore, makes the following specific recommendations:

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. RECRUITMENT PROGRAM. That the State through its Personnel Board establish an active program for the continuous, aggressive recruitment of mental health employees, such a program being implemented by the use of Recruiting Teams operating throughout the State.
2. HIGHER STARTING SALARIES. That the Personnel Board, in hiring persons with superior qualifications, hire such persons at a starting salary in excess of the established minimum, subject only to the classification salary range limitations.
3. REVISORY CLASSIFICATION. That the Personnel Board work toward a speedier re-evaluation and classification of positions, initiating prompt adjustment in schedules whenever inequities exist.
4. NEW INSTITUTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS. That the Personnel Board establish appropriate personnel classifications covering the following institutional positions: a teaching position, a psychiatric aide position and an institutional worker category.