

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FINAL REPORT
TO THE 106th LEGISLATURE

BANGOR STATE HOSPITAL
STUDY COMMITTEE

April, 1973
State House, Augusta, Maine

BANGOR STATE HOSPITAL
STUDY COMMITTEE

Representative John M. Norris, II, Chairman

Members of the Committee

Senator Frank W. Anderson

Senator Carroll E. Minkowsky

Senator Wakine G. Tanous

Representative Eugene L. Churchill

Representative Minnette W. Cummings

Representative Frank J. Murray



STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04330

April 1, 1973

To the Members of the 106th Legislature:

Pursuant to the Joint Order of the Special Session of the 105th Legislature, the Bangor State Hospital Study Committee hereby has the pleasure of submitting to you its unanimous report and recommendations.

The Committee wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the generous cooperation and valuable assistance of the Department of Mental Health and Corrections. We would particularly like to extend our thanks to the Commissioner of the Department, Dr. William F. Kearns, Jr.; the Director of the Bureau of Mental Health, Dr. William E. Schumacher; and the Superintendent of the Bangor State Hospital, Dr. Bernard Saper. The Committee also extends its gratitude to the entire professional and non-professional staff of Bangor State Hospital.

The members of the Committee appreciate having had the opportunity to serve the Legislature and hope that the recommendations contained in their report will be beneficial to the future of the Bangor State Hospital and the people of Maine.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'John M. Norris, II'.

John M. Norris, II, Chairman
Bangor State Hospital
Study Committee

BANGOR STATE HOSPITAL

STUDY COMMITTEE

Priority #1

- A. Engaging a Director of Psychiatric Services
- B. 4 Psychiatrists
- C. Neurologist

Recommendation:

Allow the \$225,000 appropriated at the last Special Session to remain in the Bangor State Hospital budget (with any contractual stipulations removed).

Priority #2

		1973-74	1975-76
Grant Writer	Personal	\$12,500	\$12,500
Public Information & Education Officer	Personal	\$12,500	\$12,500

The Committee feels that a Grant Writer would obtain federal funds that are available and are not being utilized.

The Committee also feels that a research program is vital to obtaining psychiatrists at Bangor State Hospital. Such a program should be possible through federal funding.

There is a serious lack of informed communication between the Bangor State Hospital, the Legislature and the general public. The Committee feels that establishing a public information and education position could correct this problem. A direct line of communication would be provided to the general public and/or the Legislature on the many problems requiring information.

Priority #3

The Committee recommends that Part II of the Department's budget be passed intact. We feel that the requests are minimal, when we are able to hire a director of psychiatric services, four psychiatrists, one neurologist, and obtain proper medical coverage (which is in progress).

Bangor State Hospital would be at the bare minimum personnel standards for adequate treatment of the mentally ill, recommended by the U.S. District Court in the case of Wyatt v. Stickney (344 F. Supp. 387. 1972.).

Priority #3 (continued)

Minimum		Bangor State Hospital	
Treatment		Present	
Personal		Treatment	
<u>Wyatt</u>		Personal	302
<u>v.</u>		Additional	
<u>Stickney</u>	325	Treatment	
		Personal	26
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TOTAL	325	TOTAL	328

Priority #4

20-year retirement for workers at Bangor State Hospital who work in direct contact with residents in the wards. These employees would receive one-half their pay at the time of retirement. The Committee feels this would provide better morale for workers and residents.

Priority #5

Accreditation

The Committee feels that the Hospital will be accredited in the near future, according to the pace set by the new Superintendent and the Commissioner.

The Committee would like to state that many of the internal problems of Bangor State Hospital are being thoroughly and carefully resolved by the new Superintendent, Dr. Bernard Saper, who is a Ph.D. psychologist. The lines of communication between Bangor State Hospital, the medical community, and the Counseling Center are open. The overall approach to mental health is improving.

The Counseling Center in-patient unit has been established at Bangor State Hospital.

The Patient Advocate has been appointed to speak for the patients. The fact that a person once became a second-class citizen upon admission to Bangor State Hospital is slowly becoming a thing of the past.

Priority #6

The establishment of a claims committee to protect the administration and professionals against malpractice suits. The cost of an insurance policy would be prohibitive.

The Committee feels this would help remove one of the major barriers to hiring qualified professionals, psychiatrists, psychologists, M.D.'s, social workers, etc. Such protection is offered in many other states.

The Committee found the dietary services (with the additional monies appropriated in the last Special Session) to be adequate. The capital improvements recommended by

the Department should be enacted as scheduled. The Committee found safety standards in many areas to be precarious and would recommend a closer look at these problems by qualified professionals.

The Committee recommends that the Legislature take a long look at over-time pay for employees. Currently, over-time payments require a shuffling of hours, positions, vacation time, etc.

The Committee recommends that the Legislature appropriate funds for the eight positions (five cooks, two laborers, and one statistician) which are now financed by E.E.A. funds but will be curtailed shortly.

	1973-74	1975-76
Personal (8)	\$44,990.40	\$44,990.40

The lack of facilities to care for children under sixteen years of age with severe mental illness is one of the most serious problems at Bangor State Hospital (and at most other state institutions for the mentally ill). This is the result of statutory regulations (M.R.S. Ch. 34, § 2290 and 2291), which prevent children younger than sixteen from being admitted to the state mental institutions.

The Committee makes a distinction between the mentally retarded and the emotionally disturbed. We feel that the two should have separate facilities. In order that proper segregation may be more realistically attained, we are submitting legislation to waive the minimum age requirement for admission to the state mental institutions.

SUMMATION:

Due to the time factor involved, it was impossible to submit this legislation in single form. Each recommendation in this report has been formalized in a specific legislative recommendation for consideration by the 106th Legislature.

The Committee urges that these proposals and recommendations be enacted forthwith. If their recommendations are not enacted, the Committee feels that costly class action suits are inevitable. The ultimate result is that the Courts would force Maine to implement the Committee's proposals.