

Admission Procedures for the Mentally Retarded



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
in cooperation with
Michigan Association for Retarded Children

A Difficult Decision

Authorities in the field of mental retardation have long recognized the complexity of the social and emotional problems involved in the decision to place a member of a family in an institution. Regardless of the degree of handicap, however difficult the problems of keeping a seriously retarded child at home, the decision is always fraught with anxieties and feelings of overwhelming emotion. Added to this, the conscientious parent, motivated only by a sincere desire to do what is best for his handicapped child and for other members of the family, often finds himself at the mercy of well-meaning but uninformed relatives, friends, and neighbors who give conflicting advice.

The parents, too, may have a mental picture of the process of present-day admission procedures based on out-dated opinion, assumptions, or dramatized accounts in fiction which is at variance with the truth. A simple explanation of the actual admission procedure may often be of help in coming to a decision. This, with points of reference where further information may be obtained, has often been of invaluable assistance to parents facing such a decision.

It is to perform such a service for the parents and families of the retarded that this pamphlet has been prepared. It is presented here in the hope it will lighten the burden of decision and lead to happier adjustments for the retarded child and his family.

There are two ways in which a mentally retarded resident of the State of Michigan can be admitted to a State Home and Training School: (1) by Court Commitment, and (2) by Voluntary Admission.

COURT COMMITMENT

1. Filing a Petition

This petition is available from the Probate Court in the county where the patient has legal residence. It may be filed by his father, mother, sister, brother, son or daughter (if of legal age), guardian, sheriff or any other person acceptable to the Court. The petition is made under oath and must set forth the facts regarding the mental condition of the individual to be committed. The petition cannot be based solely on the patient's intelligence quotient. The petition must state that the patient, for example, is twelve years of age, is not toilet-trained, is unable to take care of his personal needs, etc.

2. Appointment of Medical Examiners

When the petition is filed, the Probate Court will appoint two or, if necessary, three physicians to examine the patient, and to determine if, in their opinion, he is: (1) mentally retarded; and (2) a suitable candidate for admission to a state institution. Such physicians need not be psychiatrists, but they must be physicians licensed to practice medicine in the State of Michigan (one of these may be the family doctor). State hospital physicians are not permitted to make this examination.

Examination of the Patient

Regardless of the number of examinations previous to the petitioning of the Court, there must be two medical examinations. It is helpful if the family submit any previous medical history to the examining physicians.

The examining physicians return certificates to the Court stating (if so are their findings) that the patient is mentally handicapped and a suitable candidate for admission to a state institution. These reports then become a part of the Court Record.

4. Notice of Hearing

The court sets a date for the hearing and issues written notices which must be personally handed to and served upon the petitioner. The hearing

cannot be held for at least 24 hours after the notice is served.

5. The Hearing

On the date set by the notices, the petition appears in Court. The patient also must appear unless the Probate Judge decides that it is unsafe or detrimental to his health for him to do so. At this time, the Judge hears any testimony pertinent to the case and the physicians' opinions are entered as part of the hearing proceedings.

6. The Court's Findings

If the person is adjudged to be mentally retarded and is committed to a state institution, a Court Order for admission is prepared which states the findings and the decision. Also stated in the Order is the amount of payment to be made by relatives or from the estate of the committed. This is determined by the Probate Judge and is entered as part of the Order.

Full or partial payment for support may be ordered; or the patient may be committed as a public patient, in which case support for the first year's care is charged to his county of residence, and thereafter the cost of care is paid by state appropriation. In the event the patient's financial status changes, adjustments in support payments may be approved by the Court. The cost of care may be collected from the estate of the patient, if the Court so determines.

One copy of the order is sent to the institution and one copy to the Hospital Division, Department of Revenue. The Department of Revenue is charged with collection of support fees. After the Court Order for admission is received by the institution, the patient's name is placed on the waiting list.

This is the end of the Court Commitment procedure. To summarize: (1) a petition is filed with the Probate Court; (2) medical examiners are appointed; (3) the patient is examined by two Court-approved physicians; (4) the Judge rules on the petition at a Court hearing; (5) financial assessment is made; (6) the patient's name is placed on a waiting list.

VOLUNTARY ADMISSION

The Voluntary Admission provides a way for a mentally retarded resident of the State of Michigan to be admitted to a State Home and Training School without being committed by the Court. Details of the process may vary slightly from institution to institution, but the essential procedure is as follows:

1. Contact to Training School

A letter is written to the nearest State Home and Training School, directed to the Medical Superintendent. The letter should state that admission of the patient to the institution is desired and an appointment should be requested.

2. Examination

The institution determines whether or not the patient is a suitable candidate for admission. This determination may be made by medical and/or psychological examination; medical and/or psychological reports of examination; and/or personal interview.

3. Approval of Admission

Approval of the patient's admission to the institution having been made, the petitioners sign an application for his admission. Four copies of the application are signed, and upon approval by the Medical Superintendent of the institution, are presented to the Probate Court of the patient's county of residence.

4. Notification of Admission

Upon notification, the petitioners visit the Probate Court* to discuss with the Probate Judge their financial responsibility for care of the patient in a state institution. The Judge then signs the application, gives one copy to the parents or guardian, sends another to the state institution, the third to the Department of Revenue, and keeps the fourth for the Court records.

5. The patient's name is then placed on the institution's waiting list.

* The reason the Probate Court must be consulted: the institution has no authority to determine the amount of support to be paid, this being regarded as a judicial act within the province of the Probate Court.

General Information

It is advisable for petitioners to visit the institution prior to filing the petition for admission or at least before the admission, in order to become informed about the institution's facilities and services. During such a visit, parents may acquaint themselves with the rules, regulations and procedures of that particular institution and thus avoid disappointments, misunderstandings and unnecessary loss of time.

It makes no difference whether the patient is committed by the Probate Court or entered by volunteer application, treatment and care is the same. It makes no difference whether the patient is full pay, partial pay or public charge, the care and treatment is the same. The patient's position on a waiting list is not affected by the type of order, whether a voluntary admission or court commitment.

If, at the time a committed person's name comes up for admission, the petitioners do not want him admitted, they may notify the institution within twenty (20) days that they do not desire admission at that time, but that they wish the patient's name to remain on the waiting list. This may be done for an indefinite time, even over a period of years, providing the Probate Court renews the order annually on or before the date of the original order for admission. It is the responsibility of the family to see that this is done. Information on renewal procedure may be obtained from the institution superintendent. If at a later date the petitioners desire admission for the patient, the institution's Medical Superintendent must be notified by the petitioners and the patient's position on the waiting list is then activated.

Michigan

State Homes and Training Schools

For information concerning specific institutions write:
Superintendent of institution in your area

Coldwater State Home
and Training School
Coldwater, Michigan

Gaylord State Home
Gaylord, Michigan

Fort Custer State Home
P.O. Box 248
Augusta, Michigan

Lapeer State Home
and Training School
Lapeer, Michigan

Howell State Hospital
Howell, Michigan

Mt. Pleasant State Home
and Training School
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

Newberry State Hospital
Newberry, Michigan

Plymouth State Home
and Training School
15480 Sheldon Road
Northville, Michigan

For Counseling, Consult:

Michigan Child Guidance Clinics

Northeast Michigan
Child Guidance Clinic
1330 Fourth Street
Alpena, Michigan

Battle Creek Child
Guidance Clinic
155 Garfield Avenue
Battle Creek, Michigan

Bay Area Child
Guidance Clinic
609 South Monroe Street
Bay City, Michigan

Twin City Child
Guidance Clinic
596 Colfax Avenue
Benton Harbor, Michigan

Children's Center
of Wayne County
5475 Woodward Avenue
Detroit 2, Michigan

Downriver Child
Guidance Clinic
1275 Southfield Road
Lincoln Park, Michigan

Northwestern Child
Guidance Clinic
Room 236—Wayne
County Health Center
Eloise, Michigan

Flint Child
Guidance Clinic
421 West Fifth Avenue
Flint 3, Michigan

Shiawassee County
Branch
105 North Ball Street
Owosso, Michigan

Grand Rapids
Child Guidance Clinic
703 Madison Ave. S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Kalamazoo Child
Guidance Clinic
2615 Stadium Drive
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Lansing Child
Guidance Clinic
600 Leshner Place
Lansing, Michigan

Upper Peninsula
Child Guidance Clinic
418 West Magnetic
Marquette, Michigan
Escanaba Area Branch
1229 Sheridan Road
Escanaba, Michigan

U. P. Branch Clinics
(Continued)

Copper Country Branch
Rice Memorial Clinic
Box 151, Canal Road
Houghton, Michigan

Gogebic Branch
525 Vaughn Street
Ironwood, Michigan

Eastern Branch
1002 Kimball Street
Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

Macomb Child
Guidance Clinic
123 Cass Avenue
Mt. Clemens, Michigan

Lakeside Branch
23043 Francis
St. Clair Shores, Mich.

Warren Branch
6611 Chicago Road
Warren, Michigan

Central Michigan
Child Guidance Clinic
402 South College Ave.
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

Muskegon Area
Child Guidance Clinic
2525 Hall Road
Muskegon, Michigan

Grand Haven Branch
503 Columbus Street
Grand Haven, Mich.

Holland Branch
363 Van Raalte Ave.
Holland, Michigan

Petoskey Child
Guidance Clinic
603 East Lake Street
Petoskey, Michigan

North Oakland
Child Guidance Clinic
113 Franklin Boulevard
Pontiac 15, Michigan

Mid-Oakland Branch
386 East Maple Ave.
Birmingham, Michigan

South Oakland
Child Guidance Clinic
323 West Sixth Street
Royal Oak, Michigan

Saginaw Valley
Child Guidance Clinic
3253 Congress Street
Saginaw, Michigan

Northwest Michigan
Child Guidance Clinic
Munson Hospital
Traverse City, Michigan

Cadillac Branch
Court House
Cadillac, Michigan

Ludington Branch
Court House
Ludington, Michigan

Huron Valley
Child Guidance Clinic
2940 Ellsworth Road
Ypsilanti, Michigan