

History 16 A Survey of Fiscal Policies at State Sanatoriums

Below is an excerpt from a report detailing costs incurred in 1922 operating the Cresson TB San.

A survey of the fiscal policies of the state of Pennsylvania

Part 3 1922

By Harlan Updegraff, LeRoy Albert King, Citizens' Committee

An expensive fad was the ten thousand five hundred dollar ventilating system at Cresson that was never used.

Store Rooms and Food Consumption at Mt. Alto.—Either a rearrangement of stores in the present building or a new storage building is urgently needed. Your investigator found stores under seven locks in distant parts of the basement. The cost of receiving and distributing supplies must be much higher than would be the case if there were a well-organized single store-room besides the refrigerators.

In his general survey of all the institutions of the state, Mr. Henry C. Wright found that the pounds of food consumed last year at Mont Alto exceeded by 935 pounds for each person fed, the pounds consumed at Hamburg and exceeded by nearly 1,500 pounds the food consumed by each individual at Cresson Sanatorium. The average consumption by each person at Mont Alto was somewhat over 3,100 pounds. This statement indicates the need of a careful investigation of possible sources of loss and waste.

State Sanatorium No. 2 at Cresson is located on 500 acres of land in a mountainous woodland region. The investment in land, buildings and equipment amounts to \$1,195,473. (Exclusive of store-room supplies.) The Department estimates a 25% depreciation, leaving a net present valuation of \$896,604.

The Medical Director, Dr. W. G. Turnbull, is recognized as one of the foremost sanatorium administrators in the United States. A survey of the institution confirms his reputation. The morale among patients and employees appeared to be all that could be desired. The discipline of the children in hospital, school and dining-room appears to be complete and thorough. That implies what is apparent, that the children are contented and happy.

Your investigators ate three meals in the institution, which according to the menu records was no different from the customary service. We do not recall ever having been served so good food in any similar large sanatorium.

The medical personnel is not so large as called for by the standards of the American Sanatorium Association. The four physicians, however, have been with Dr. Turnbull for several years, and, in his opinion, have their work so organized and systematized as to make it unnecessary to employ a larger corps of assistants.

The outstanding need of this sanatorium is a new amusement hall similar to the one now being completed at Hamburg. A significant paragraph in the report of the Medical Director under date of October 24, 1922, reflects great credit upon the local management and the State Department of Health:

In looking back over the ten years of work in this institution, the outstanding feature of the past four years is one that cannot be well shown on a statistical report. It consists of humanizing of our institution; making it less of an institution for the routine treatment of a disease, and more of a community and home in which sick people can live. For the first time state money has been available for the entertainment of patients, for promoting social life among them, for buying books and conducting our schools properly, and for equipping and maintaining proper playgrounds for our children. Our construction expenditures during this period have been not for increasing the number of hospital beds, but for making life more pleasant for the patients we already had. At no time during the past four years has anything been refused the Director of this institution if he could show that it would add anything to the welfare, comfort, or happiness of our patients.

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