

PRAIRIE VIEW VISIT TALKING POINTS

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO TOUR THE IMPRESSIVE FACILITIES HERE, AND TO SEE FIRSTHAND THE GOOD WORK OF THE DEDICATED STAFF AT PRAIRIE VIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL. THE SIZE OF YOUR OPERATION AND THE VARIETY OF QUALITY TREATMENT AND CARE YOU PROVIDE DEMONSTRATES YOUR STRONG COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF YOUR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

I AM PROUD THAT KANSAS HAS SUCH A FIRST RATE AND NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HOSPITAL. OUR STATE IS A REAL LEADER WHEN IT COMES TO STATE OF THE ART DISABILITY PROGRAMS WHICH FOCUS ON DEVELOPING ONE'S ABILITY RATHER THAN EMPHASIZING ONE'S DISABILITY.

THE NEW HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CENTER WHICH WILL CENTRALIZE ALL ACADEMIC RESEARCH ABOUT PREVENTING DISABILITY AND ASSISTING PEOPLE TO LIVE SELF\_DIRECTED LIVES.

THIS IS AN EXCITING YEAR GIVEN THE HISTORIC PASSAGE OF COMPREHENSIVE CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. OF COURSE, I AM SPEAKING ABOUT THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) AND ITS STRONG MANDATE TO REDRESS DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT, PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS, TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, THE ADA IS A LANDMARK LAW, GIVING AMERICA A RINGING MANDATE TO MOVE DISABILITY POLICY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY. NEVERTHELESS, WE NEED TO KEEP WORKING TOGETHER.

SIMPLY REQUIRING A MANDATE DOES NOT REMOVE THE ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS THAT CONTINUE TO PLAGUE OUR SOCIETY. BESIDES THE OUTSTANDING CARE YOU PROFESSIONALS PROVIDE, YOU CAN ALSO BE ADVOCATES OF CHANGE. YOU HAVE THE ABILITY EXPERTISE TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC, TO EASE THEIR FEAR AND MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS.

ANOTHER POSITIVE STEP CONGRESS TOOK THIS YEAR WAS AN EXPANSION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, IN PARTICULAR WITH THE CARE OF CHILDREN. AS THE OLD ADAGE GOES: "AN OUNCE OF CARE IS WORTH A POUND OF PREVENTION." ADDRESSING PROBLEMS EARLY ON IS SOUND POLICY.

AT THE VERY LEAST OUR NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH POLICY SHOULD REFLECT A COORDINATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FAMILY SUPPORTS. WE'VE TAKEN A STEP FORWARD BUT WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.

PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS SHOULD HAVE AVAILABLE TO THEM A FULL NETWORK OF ACCESSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND, AS NEEDED, OTHER SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND BENEFITS SUCH AS HOUSING, RESIDENTIAL SERVICES, EMPLOYMENT, REHABILITATION, INCOME SUPPORT, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SO THAT EACH PERSON RECEIVES THE TREATMENT, TRAINING AND SUPPORT NECESSARY TO ENABLE THEM TO FUNCTION AT THEIR HIGHEST LEVEL.

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT IS THE KEY TO INTEGRATION INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF SOCIETY. TO THIS END I ESTABLISHED A FOUNDATION IN 1983 TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO PROGRAMS THAT SHARE MY BELIEF IN THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYMENT. THAT IS WHERE YOUR DEDICATION BECOMES IMPORTANT -- PREPARING YOUR CLIENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE AND PARTICIPATORY ROLE CONTRIBUTING TO THE WORKFORCE AS WORKERS AND TAXPAYERS.

IN CLOSING I WANT TO AGAIN COMMEND YOU AND ALL OF THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH PRAIRIE VIEW FOR YOUR IMPRESSIVE CONSUMER MODEL OF HEALTH CARE. PRAIRIE VIEW INNOVATIONS SUCH AS THE STRUCTURED THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY OFFER CLIENTS ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR TREATMENT PLANS. CONSUMER CHOICE IS THE WAY TO GO; IT HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN THE GREAT SUCCESS OF PRAIRIE VIEW.