

ASSEMBLY COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2424

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 9, 1997

The Assembly Community Services Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2424.

This bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to designate staff who are not employed at a State psychiatric facility listed in R.S.30:1-7 to review the daily operation of the State psychiatric facilities by conducting unannounced site visits to randomly check staffing on the various shifts at a State psychiatric facility, at least three times during a calendar year.

During the visit, the designated staff shall review:

- C the actual deployment of clinical treatment staff and nursing direct care staff on various shifts to determine whether the actual deployment meets the documented staffing plan;
- C the system for reporting any information concerning alleged patient abuse or professional misconduct;
- C the operation of therapeutic programs of activities for patients; and
- C any other aspect of the facility which the commissioner deems appropriate.

In addition, the bill requires the commissioner to provide and implement surveillance procedures, including but not limited to, the use of security cameras and the use of persons to perform covert investigations of the daily operation of the facility. Persons performing covert investigations shall assume roles which do not suggest their actual functions.

This legislation is part of a package of bills which was recommended in the Final Report of the Senate Task Force on Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital (June 1996) and is designed to improve the care provided in the State's psychiatric facilities. The task force believes that the more frequent and intense monitoring of daily operations, as provided for in this legislation, will provide enhanced patient care and reduce the frequency of patient abuse and neglect.

This bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 1540, which was released by this committee on this date.