

NATIONAL COMMITTEE *against* MENTAL ILLNESS

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August 5, 1965

**The Honorable Melvin Laird
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.**

Dear Mel:

As you probably know, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted an increase of \$30,300,000 over the House for the National Institutes of Health during fiscal 1966. This is somewhat of a disappointment to Mrs. Lasker and me since we told you at lunch several weeks ago that we hoped the Senate figure would cover the \$40 million of approved research and training grants which could not be funded this year because of lack of funds.

The restrictive nature of the Senate increases can be illustrated by the funds for mental health, an area in which I am most interested. The Senate Appropriations Committee voted an increase of \$7 million -- \$6,500,000 for training and \$500,000 for additional personnel in the nine NIMH regional offices to provide technical assistance to the states and local communities in connection with the new community mental health center program.

The Senate report notes that during fiscal 1965 approved training grant applications from 245 institutions in the amount of \$9.5 million could not be paid this year because of lack of funds. The Senate report further notes that the sum it voted for mental health training -- \$89 million -- is \$11 million below the training projections which accompanied the mental health centers legislation of 1963. To quote the Senate report:

"The present training programs of the Institute not only fail to meet the future needs of the community mental health center program, but fall far short of providing the funds needed to support training programs which have already been reviewed and approved... The committee is convinced that the entire community mental health center program is in serious jeopardy unless the pace of the training programs is accelerated to provide the competent personnel that will be needed to staff these centers."

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Wisconsin is one of fourteen states which have community mental health services acts which authorize state appropriations to assist local communities in matching federal funds for the construction and staffing of mental health centers.

I am, as you know, interested in the programs of all of the Institutes. For example, the Senate increase of \$5 million voted specifically to the National Cancer Institute for the virus-leukemia program, is an absolute minimum, since retention of the Administration budget figure would mean that not even one single new contract could be awarded in this area.

I therefore make this earnest plea to you to help John Fogarty hold the full Senate figure in conference. Knowing how much you have done for us in the past, I am confident that you will help us at this critical moment.

Cordially,

Mike Gorman