



CIRCULAR

RELATING TO THE

CARE OF THE CHRONIC INSANE  
BY COUNTIES,

Issued by the State Board of Charities and Reform.

*To Superintendents of the Poor and Members of County Boards:*

GENTLEMEN: There are at present in the state of Wisconsin about 1,700 insane persons under public care. Of these there were, as reported to us April 14, 568 in the State Hospital for the Insane, 522 in the Northern Hospital for the Insane, and 272 in the Milwaukee County Insane Asylum, of whom only 260 were from this state. There were thus at that date, 1,350 insane persons in these three institutions belonging to the state of Wisconsin. The remainder, or about 350, are in the poor houses and jails, mostly in poor houses. The number of the insane in this state is increasing faster than the population, and faster than state institutions are likely to be built to accommodate them. It is not therefore probable that the poor-houses can ever be emptied of their chronic insane.

Recognizing this fact, the legislature this winter passed a law (chapter 233 of the laws of 1881), which provides for the more humane care of the chronic insane in poor-houses. According to this law, whenever there is insufficient provision for the insane in state hospitals and county asylums, the State Board of Charities and Reform may establish rules for the care of the chronic insane by counties, and the counties which come up to the rules shall receive from the state one dollar and a half a week for each insane person thus cared for. The law also provides that the accounts

of counties for the care of such chronic insane are to be approved by the State Board of Charities and Reform. The State Board of Charities and Reform may remove any insane persons from counties which do not have proper accommodation for their chronic insane, to counties which do properly care for them. In such case the counties from which the insane are transferred pay the same price as they would for the same persons at the state institutions, and the counties to which they are transferred receive the same, and also one dollar and a half a week from the state, making in all three dollars a week and the cost of clothing.

Acting under this law, the State Board of Charities and Reform have adopted the rules for the care of the chronic insane in poor-houses which are given on page five of this circular.

It will be noticed that no rule has been adopted in regard to the size or location of buildings for the insane. The circumstances of counties and the number and character of their chronic insane vary so greatly that no general rule can be adopted. In many counties the present buildings with some inexpensive changes will be quite enough for the present. The board do not believe that the insane need costly buildings as much as they do proper attention by those having them in charge. We quote the words of one of our members, addressed to the National Conference of Charities :

One of the legal requirements of our Board is to annually inspect the poor-houses of the state, for the purpose, among other specified duties, of ascertaining the number of insane inmates, *and whether such arrangements are made for their care as humanity demands*, with power to make recommendations only. This requirement, which has been faithfully performed for the ninth time, has, I am gratified to say, resulted in great practical benefit to the insane. It is superfluous to say to this conference of experts that we found on our first tours of inspection that humanity had a just claim for better arrangements. But being converts to the popular dogma of state hospitals for all the insane, and not doubting its speedy accomplishment, our recommendations for improved poor-house arrangements were all of a temporary character, while we annually urged upon the legislature the necessity and importance of increasing the hospital accommodations as rapidly as possible, then only sufficient for 350 patients. Within the next six years succeeding the organization of our Board, the state almost trebled its hospital capacity, which was fully occupied without materially diminishing the number under poor-house care. During this time, there was under the partial

state supervision, a noticeable improvement in the condition of the latter, especially in counties having asylum buildings partially separated from the poor-house. These facts, taken in connection, led to the belief among the members of our board that it was not practicable, nor would it be, under efficient supervision, desirable, to furnish state hospitals for the chronic pauper insane; that they would be in better condition mentally and physically as inmates of an asylum in connection with a poor-house, where the farm, garden, house and barn, would furnish that most effective restorative of this class, light employment to all who could be induced to engage in it. Among so small a number, and by a little tact on the part of the superintendent, he could offer extra inducements by accommodating each one with employment suited to his inclination or capacity, which would be impracticable in one of our large state hospitals, where the greater part of the labor is, necessarily performed by machinery or employes, and the balance is required to be done under a surveillance which renders it so distasteful as to be resisted, or if performed, to counteract its good effects; and that the average per capita cost of maintenance in the county asylum would be less than one-half that of the state hospital.

We call special attention to the rules 4, 5 and 6, which relate to occupation and non-restraint for the insane, and would refer you to the same subject as treated of on page 180 of our last annual report.

Counties applying to be placed upon the list to be certified to the secretary of state, should be sure that all the insane are properly adjudged to be insane, and that they have the evidence of such adjudication, as only those who have been declared insane by legal authority can be counted for the payment by the state.

Counties wishing to be placed upon this list, should, through their proper authorities, correspond with the State Board of Charities and Reform for further information.

ANDREW E. ELMORE, *President.*

H. H. GILES.

W. W. REED.

J. H. VIVIAN.

MRS. E. B. FAIRBANKS.

A. O. WRIGHT, *Secretary.*

MADISON, WIS., May 23, 1881.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED MAY 23, 1881, BY THE  
STATE BOARD OF CHARITIES AND REFORM.

WHEREAS, By chapter 233 of the laws of 1881, it is provided that "when-  
ever it shall appear to the State Board of Charities and Reform that insuffi-  
cient provision has been made for the care and support of the insane in the  
state hospitals and county asylums previously established according to law,  
said board may file with the secretary of state a list of counties in which no  
county asylums exist, and which, in the opinion of said board, possess  
accommodations for the proper care of the chronic insane; and thereafter  
each of said counties so named which shall care for its own chronic insane,  
under such rules as said board shall prescribe, on the properly verified cer-  
tificate of said board to the secretary of state, shall receive the sum of one  
dollar and fifty cents per week for each person so cared for and supported."

AND WHEREAS, It appears from our last report, and from recent informa-  
tion from the superintendents of the three institutions for the insane, that the  
number of the insane in the state much exceeds the number who can be  
accommodated in the State Hospital, in the Northern Hospital, and in the  
Milwaukee County Insane Asylum;

*Resolved*, That the conditions do now exist which call for the action of  
this board under said law.

*Resolved*, That the following rules are hereby adopted for the care of the  
chronic insane under county care, and that any county which shall fully  
comply with these rules shall be placed upon the list of counties which  
this board will certify to as entitled to receive the benefits of said board, and  
shall be kept upon that list so long, and only so long, as all these rules shall  
be fully complied with, or such further regulations as the board may here-  
after prescribe.

## RULES FOR THE CARE OF THE CHRONIC INSANE.

1. The buildings or parts of buildings set apart for the insane must be sufficiently warmed, lighted and ventilated. They must be clean and free from all offensive odors; and in addition to the sleeping apartments, they must have an associate day room or common sitting room for each sex.

2. There must be a large airing court or enclosed yard for each sex.

3. There must be a sufficient number of special attendants for each sex.

4. As far as possible regular occupation should be provided for the insane, at such kinds of labor as they can be induced to engage in. We would specially suggest gardening and farm labor for the men, and housework for the women.

5. Restraints of all kinds, such as shutting up in cells, tying the hands with hand-cuffs or "muffs," or shutting into covered beds, should be used only in extreme cases.

6. A daily record book must be kept showing the persons in restraint, the kind of restraint, and the reasons for it.

7. The overseer of the poor house and his wife and all employes who have charge of the insane must be intelligent and humane persons of correct habits.

8. Some experienced physician must be appointed county physician, who shall thoroughly inspect the building and patients as often as may be necessary, and at least semi-monthly.

9. The overseer of the poor house and the county physician shall report to the State Board of Charities and Reform in such form and at such times as the board shall prescribe.

10. The buildings or parts of buildings set apart for the insane shall at all times be open to the inspection of the State Board of Charities and Reform, or of any person or persons authorized by them.

11. The State Board of Charities and Reform may at any time add to, change or modify these rules as they may deem best for the interests of the patients.

## THE LAW RELATING TO THE CARE OF THE CHRONIC INSANE BY COUNTIES.

[Published April 8, 1881.]

### CHAPTER 233.

AN ACT to provide for the humane care of the chronic insane not otherwise provided for.

*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Whenever it shall appear to the state board of charities and reform that insufficient provision has been made for the care and support of the insane, in the state hospitals and county asylums previously established according to law, said board may file with the secretary of state a list of counties in which no county asylums exist, and which, in the opinion of the said board, possess accommodations for the proper care of the chronic insane; and thereafter each of said counties so named which shall care for its own chronic insane, under such rules as said board shall prescribe, on the properly verified certificate of said board to the secretary of state, shall receive the sum of one dollar and fifty cents per week for each person so cared for and supported, as hereinafter provided.

SECTION 2. On the first day of October in each year the county superintendent of the poor, or other officer having charge of the poor of any county on said list, claiming compensation for the care of its chronic insane, shall certify to the secretary of state the names of all persons necessarily cared for and supported by said county at public cost, the date when said person became insane, and the number of weeks each of said insane persons were cared for during the preceding year, making affidavit to the same; and if such certified statement shall be approved by said board of charities and reform the secretary of state shall include the amount which such county shall be entitled to receive from the state under the provisions of this act, in the next state tax, and on the first day of February thereafter shall place said amount to the credit of said county.

SECTION 3. Whenever, in the opinion of said board of charities and reform, any county has not made suitable provisions for the proper and humane care of either its chronic or acute insane, the said board may direct the removal of either class of said insane to any county asylum, or to any other county possessing suitable accommodations therefor for care and medical treatment, as the circumstances may seem to require; and said insane shall be so removed at the expense of the county to which they belong.

SECTION 4. Any county named in the first section of this act, possessing accommodations for a greater number of the chronic insane than reside in such county, may receive such additional insane persons as the state board of charities and reform may direct to be transferred thereto, from counties that do not possess accommodations for the proper care of their own insane,

and may include all such persons in the list of insane certified to the secretary of state, as provided in the second section of this act, and shall receive from the secretary of state a credit, to the amount of three dollars per week for each such person so received and cared for from another county, and for the amount necessarily expended for clothing said person; one dollar and a half of the aforesaid amount of three dollars per week, and the amount actually expended by such county for clothing such insane person, shall be charged by the secretary of state to the county from which such insane person was sent, and shall be included in the amount charged in the next state tax to said county.

SECTION 5. Nothing in this act shall be construed to entitle any county to compensation for the care and support of any person not previously adjudged to be an insane person, and properly committed as such under the laws of this state relating to the commitment of insane persons to the hospitals of this state; nor shall any county be entitled to compensation for the care and support of any insane person not lawfully and necessarily a public charge.

SECTION 6. Sections one thousand five hundred and two, one thousand five hundred and three, one thousand five hundred and four and one thousand five hundred and five of chapter sixty-three, revised statutes of 1878, relating to the relief and support of the poor, are hereby declared to be applicable to insane persons, in the same manner and to the same extent that they now apply to other classes unable to maintain themselves, described in section one thousand five hundred and two of said chapter.

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SECTION 12. The property and estate of any insane person, kept in any state or county asylum, or kept by any county at public charge under the provisions of this act, shall be liable for his support and maintenance and chargeable for the payment thereof, and upon failure of the person or persons having the charge or custody of such property or estate to pay therefrom for such support and maintenance, the board of trustees of the hospital or asylum, or the chairman of the board of supervisors of the county furnishing such support, may apply to the county judge of the proper county to compel such payment. In cases arising under the provisions of this section such county judge shall have the jurisdiction and authority conferred by chapter sixty-three of the revised statutes, and shall exercise such jurisdiction and authority in the manner provided by said chapter, and he may enforce obedience to his orders by proceedings as for a contempt. If any order or orders made by such judge requiring such payment shall not be complied with either of the officers in this section designated, to-wit: such board of trustees of any hospital or asylum or the chairman of the board of supervisors of any county, may recover in an action against the person or persons having the charge or custody of such property or estate brought in the circuit court against him or them in his or their representative character, the amount directed to be paid by such order or orders, and any judgment so recovered may be satisfied out of such property or estate; such court may, in its discre-

tion direct that the costs in such action, if the plaintiff recovers judgment, be paid out of such property or estate or by the person or persons having the charge or custody thereof.

SECTION 13. Any county having chronic insane to be returned or delivered to it, under the provisions of this act, may select the persons to be so returned; such selection to be made in writing by the chairman of its board of supervisors, or the board of trustees of its asylum, and left, together with a proper receipt, for the person or persons delivered with the institution from which such person or persons shall bereceived.

SECTION 14. There is hereby appropriated out of the state treasury, from any moneys not otherwise appropriated, a sufficient sum for the purposes of this act.

SECTION 15. All acts and parts of acts so far as they conflict with the provisions of this act, are hereby repealed.

SECTION 16. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and publication.

Approved March 30, 1881.

(Sections 7 to 11 inclusive, which relate to another subject, are omitted).