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REpublic 7-4398

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July 13, 1954

Mrs. Albert D. Lasker  
The Lasker Foundation  
3313 Chrysler Building  
New York 17, New York

Dear Mrs. Lasker:

I am happy to report to you that the U.S. Congress has appropriated the highest sum in history for the National Institute of Mental Health for the fiscal year which began on July 1, 1954. The Institute has been allotted \$14,147,500, an increase of \$2,052,500 over last year's figure.

Both Houses of Congress, in appropriating increased monies for the activities of the Institute, showed a keen awareness of the prime need for both increased research upon mental illness and greatly accelerated training programs for psychiatric personnel. For example, the Senate Committee on Appropriations explained its increase over the Administration budget figure in these incisive words in its report to the full Senate:

"Such an increase recognizes that the ultimate goal sought under these activities can only be achieved by a combination of increased manpower and an increased intensity of research activity. Training is particularly stressed in this appropriation since despite the training program sponsored by this Institute for 7 years, the need for specially trained personnel continues to increase at a rapid rate. The general problem of the mentally ill is so great that it is not possible to satisfy it by Federal action alone and the committee is gratified to learn of increasing activity in these fields by regional associations of States. The committee commends the Institute for its part in stimulating this needed activity.

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**Purpose: Through a broad educational campaign, to create public understanding and support of the 10-point Bill of Rights for the mentally ill adopted by the 1954 National Governors' Conference on Mental Health. To convince the American people to actively support federal, state and local preventive mental health programs emphasizing research, training and expanded clinic and community services designed to treat and cure mental illness in its early stages.**

## II

"Research progress in this area is expectedly slow due to the very nature of the problems posed by mental illness and again due to shortages in research talent. However, it is encouraging to note the beginning entrance of diversely trained scientists into these areas and trust such a trend will continue. This latter happening has already permitted the beginning of programs on the causes of mental illness including the role of metabolic and endocrine factors. Seeking an organic cause for certain of the systematic psychoses is a trend in mental health research with exciting possibilities."

However, the final figure authorized by the Congress falls far short of the \$29,550,000 requested by the National Mental Health Committee. Our major disappointment occurred in the area of construction monies for mental health research facilities - although we had requested \$8,000,000 for this important item, we were not allowed any money for the fiscal year 1955. However, there is reason for some optimism even in this field. The authoritative WASHINGTON REPORT ON THE MEDICAL SCIENCES reported the following on July 5th.

"Likelihood is increasing that in another year Congress will grant funds for construction, expansion and improvement of research facilities in hospitals and professional schools...Senate investigators are gathering data relating to the feasibility of broadening research assistance in this manner."

As a further evidence of keen Congressional interest in construction monies for research facilities, Senator Edward J. Thye, chairman of the Subcommittee that handles the mental health funds, had this to say on the floor of the Senate:

"I shall expect the committee staff...to assist in the preparation of data and the survey of the whole problem in an effort to bring the question before the Senate for a definite conclusion as to whether public monies should be granted to our colleges and hospitals and other nonprofit institutions to add to the total research facilities in the fight against disease. I hope our study and investigations will offer sufficient evidence to permit us to reach an affirmative conclusion. I personally think that such an expenditure of Federal funds would inure greatly to the public benefit."

### III

The National Mental Health Committee will redouble its efforts to obtain these vital research construction monies, but it desperately needs help from the grass roots. State and local mental health societies and individual psychiatrists should write to their Congressmen, or preferably visit them when they are back home, and explain to them the urgent need for these funds.

Our Committee cannot begin to thank the many people who played so appreciable a part in gaining a record sum of money for the National Institute of Mental Health. A great deal of credit goes to the witnesses who appeared before both House and Senate Appropriations Committees on behalf of our budget - Mr. Charles Schlaifer and Doctors Appel, Bartemier, Bond, English and Gottlieb. Their effective and well documented testimony was praised by members of both House and Senate Committees and was certainly influential in gaining the significant increase over last year's figure. Credit must also go to the state and local mental health societies who wrote very fine letters to Congressmen urging additional appropriations. Most important of all, we are deeply grateful to the state Governors, both for their activity with individual Congressmen and for their sponsorship of national and regional mental health conferences which have captured the interest and admiration of the Congress and the people.

I hope that we can work together even more closely in the coming year to achieve our common objectives. We have a long way to go but we are making very significant progress each year.

Cordially,



Mike Gorman  
Executive Director

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