



TREASURY DEPARTMENT
U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
WASHINGTON

IN REPLYING
ADDRESS THE SURGEON GENERAL
U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

May 20, 1938

PERSONAL

Medical Director Lawrence Kolb
Medical Officer in Charge
U. S. Public Health Service Hospital
Lexington, Kentucky

My dear Doctor Kolb:

I have been intending to write you a personal note concerning the matter of taking fingerprints of voluntary patients admitted to Lexington. This matter has been discussed at some length with the legal representatives of the General Counsel's office and with others here, and all of us feel that the taking of fingerprints is hardly in keeping with the intent of the act authorizing the farm. It would seem that sufficient identification exists in the signatures on the application. Verification of signatures is one of the principal means of identification in banks, especially safety deposit sections. It might be desirable to give consideration to a print of the index finger, to be placed upon the application of the individual when received for admission, in order that there would be no difficulty in identification, to make sure when the time arrives for discharge that the case in question is actually leaving the institution.

To take fingerprints of voluntary patients and file them with the fingerprints of ex-prisoners, probationers, etc. is sure to result in an accident at some time, and through change of personnel such fingerprints may find their way to another government agency, and if we do not have such records there would be no means whereby they could go astray. Moreover, such an accident would make the individual medical officer in charge of the institution personally liable should a case undertake to bring a matter of this sort into court. I have discussed this matter with Ossenfort and he is in accord with our views about the matter. This is referred to you for such action as may seem appropriate.

I am in receipt of your personal note of May 16th, advising that you will arrange the temporary storage of my furnishings when they arrive at Lexington, and I very much appreciate your courtesy in this matter. All of the things that we are shipping by van will be used in the quarters, and consist of a few living room pieces, some dishes, bric-a-brac, and other items of personal furniture which we can put into the quarters. It is not very much

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and when you arrange for storage you may keep in mind that it will only be for a temporary period.

With kindest personal regards, and looking forward to seeing you in San Francisco, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "W.H. Keeney".

Assistant Surgeon General
Division of Mental Hygiene

WLT:JE