

U. S. Public Health Service Hospital,
Lexington, Kentucky.

March 31, 1938.

Dr. Lloyd H. Ziegler,
Milwaukee Sanitarium,
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

Dear Dr. Ziegler:

Answering the question propounded in your letter of March 24, 1938, concerning the granting of four or five days' leave by a doctor to an addict patient to go to a nearby city to attend a conference and supplying him with morphine while away, my judgment is that such handling of the cases would in at least 95 per cent of the cases be a mistake. There are several reasons for this opinion. In the first place, a patient who comes in for treatment presumably wants to be cured and is ready to go through with it. If a short time later during the withdrawal he asks for such leave it indicates innearly all cases that he has weakened and needs to be bolstered up by firmness or was not sincere and is using the leave as a ruse to continue with drugs and get some from the doctor. If the conference had been so important he could have stayed out in the first place until it was over.

I think that a firmer attitude towards such patients will produce better results. It might result in causing some who would return and continue the treatment to leave permanently, but I doubt whether a good prospect for cure would ever act that way.

Sanitarium patients are, of course, in a different position from the voluntary patients that we treat here. There would never be any question about the motive of one of our patients who wanted to go out for a conference during withdrawal.

One has to think in these matters about what the Federal narcotic enforcement officers might do. They should of course have no right to question the motives of an honest sanitarium physician in giving narcotics to one of his patients to whom he had granted leave for a few days. But the motives of physicians are often questioned and if a patient such as you refer to should happen to share his narcotics with some one else as they some times do or even sell a grain of it, they could make things very embarrassing for the physician. This, of course, has nothing to do with the treatment angle but it is an angle that everyone who handles narcotics has to think about.

I expect to make my reservation in a day or so for the San Francisco trip and will then let you know about it so that if you happen to be leaving the same time we may get on the same train. I will probably go from Chicago and stop by the Grand Canyon, timing myself so as to reach Frisco on the evening of June 5. I am not going on the special train largely for the reason that I haven't been able to get information about the two trips that have been planned.

Sincerely yours,

Lawrence Kolb,