

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

December 23, 1937.

Dr. Samuel W. Hamilton,
National Committee for Mental Hygiene,
50 West 50th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Hamilton:

I heard yesterday that the Surgeon General was to be asked to permit me to take up some extra work in connection with organizing the mental hospitals in Kentucky. I assume that you are in a measure guilty and so I am writing to ask something about it.

Of course, I am very busy and have no desire to take on anything extra, but I know that conditions in this State are bad and if you have prepared the ground by convincing the Governor that I am a Messiah, the time and setting is doubtless opportune for putting over something constructive.

There is one thing I would like to know before consenting to do anything, and that is the present position of Dr. Ackerly with the Governor. Dr. Ackerly, as you probably know, has been advisor with a position but without authority and I have consulted with the Governor along with Dr. Ackerly on several occasions. My relations with Ackerly have been cordial and I would not care to do anything to offend him.

The Governor, once in conference with Ackerly, Treadway, myself, and several others, said that he would be willing to sponsor legislation to put the hospitals under a board of governors or something to that effect, and I urged Ackerly to take him up on this, but nothing came of it.

The most pressing need in Kentucky is, I believe, a personnel reorganization so that there will be security of position, better pay and an increased number of employees. Better buildings are, of course, needed but a start on this has been made.

Since it is remotely possible that I may be drafted into this work and you have made a study of the situation here as well as elsewhere, you are doubtless in a position to make some pertinent suggestions. Legislation is needed and could be put over now, if ever. Perhaps we could have a set-up here modeled after one of the States like New York or Massachusetts that presumably have a good set-up, but modified to suit Kentucky conditions. You probably know that the Constitution of the State of Kentucky requires every officer to be appointed again or get out at the end of four years, and limits the salary to \$5,000 per year. I wonder if you have copies of

the law dealing with the mental hygiene and State hospital set-up in States like New York and Massachusetts or in some other State that you might think even better of and could send these to me with any suggestions you may have. I am thinking about the time situation here and the fact that the legislature will not stay in session forever. Would you also let me know what the pay and allowances of superintendents and medical officers in the better organized States are. I have an approximate idea about this but would like to have it definite and presume that you have it at your fingers' end.

I regret that I did not see more of you while you were in Kentucky, but I know you were busy, and on the one occasion that I had knowledge you were in Lexington I happened to be occupied.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,

Lawrence Kolb,
Medical Director,
Medical Officer in Charge.

LK:gp