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OREGON STATE HOSPITAL

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July 8, 1940

To Dr. John C. Evans, Superintendent.

Reporting upon an investigation of the facts concerning the death by hanging of Mrs. Lundy, patient on ward 40, in the night of July 7th, I submit, herewith, the written report of Kathleen Dull, the night nurse on duty. I have consulted the patients, Winola U'Renn and Martha Lund, and find that they alone have knowledge of what transpired. I find the facts essentially as stated in Mrs. Dull's report.

Commenting upon this situation, I feel it my duty to remind you that in the case of a suicide on this same ward in September of last year which was accomplished in precisely the same manner, a discussion of our inadequate night service was held at our Staff Meeting. At this time we faced the situation as we face it today: two hundred and fourteen patients scattered over widely separated dormitories on two floors and in rooms adjacent to a back hall, each floor separated from the other by a stair and two closed doors; the night nurse alternating between the wards must leave one ward without supervision one-half the time. The patients above referred to advise me that patient Lundy, as they believed, waited until the night nurse had completed her rounds on ward 40 and when she heard her close the door leading to the stair as she proceeded toward ward 39, the patient seized this opportunity.

The utter futility of an effort to supervise two widely separated wards with one night nurse has been the subject of frequent discussions in our Staff. In this connection, I feel it important to report, as well, that the day nursing service is quite inadequate on both wards 39 and 40. It is especially inadequate on ward 40 for patients are frequently transferred to this ward who have been only recently received by the receiving service,--patients of whom we have little knowledge and patients who require careful supervision. I am advised by the charges of these wards that their inability to give patients adequate open air exercise is due to the fact that for a considerable part of the time only one nurse is in charge. These situations, I am advised, are due to the necessity of withdrawing nurse attendants for special detail from time to time and for relief on other wards.

Dr. John C. Evans, Superintendent
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The patients on this ward commenting upon this tragedy this morning have said to me, "I could do that any time I wanted to. Perhaps that is a good way out."

To be adequately supervised, as we have frequently discussed in the Staff Meetings, these two wards would require each: three day nurse attendants and one night attendant, a total of eight. This would afford a degree of safety and the supervision required if we are to accomplish any constructive psychiatric service on these wards.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. C. Evans", written in dark ink.

Psychiatrist.

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