

Homes must meet social needs: McIver

By Rosemary Williams of the Star-Phoenix

Special care homes must attempt to deal more effectively with the dignity and self-worth of residents, says Vera McIver of Victoria, B.C.

Mrs. McIver, director of hospital services at St. Mary's Priory Hospital in Victoria, believes education in this area is desperately needed by all "disciplines" and says this knowledge must come from faculty experienced in the field of extended care.

She told close to 500 delegates attending the Saskatchewan Association of Special Care Homes' 17th annual convention here Wednesday that home facilities should be critically evaluated so as to determine

how residents' social needs could and should be met.

Were she a senior citizen about to be admitted to a nursing home, Mrs. McIver asked if she would be stereotyped in the same manner as most other admissions.

"Will you say all the aged are alike, the aged can't make decisions or most old people are in poor health?" she asked. "If you subscribe to these myths, I am doomed."

Special care homes, she said, must meet the fundamental needs of the residents so they can continue to develop as "unique" individuals.

She said hospital-type environments will ensure that residents are molded into a "prefabricated shell of a patient."

while happy and peaceful surroundings will facilitate the provision of "humanistic care."

"Is your home a bureaucratic maze of red tape?" she demanded. "Will each department be a kingdom unto itself? Will medical staff remain aloof and the dietary schedule inflexible?"

She urged home personnel to break from tradition and reduce the staff pyramid structure. All home employees, she said, should become part of a democratic process.

"You need not be heavy-handed, as more people respond to a whisper of suggestion than a shout of command. For a dynamic organization to flourish, status must be removed. The happiness of staff

will be reflected in the eyes of the residents."

Residents, according to Mrs. McIver, should be allowed to store their clothing and personal possessions, instead of having them sent home to family.

"They should also be allowed to keep a few "precious possessions" under their own lock and key and should be fed at a well-set table, not from a bedside tray.

"If I have forgotten how to eat, teach me and encourage me," she pleaded. "Please listen to me. Don't rush by, leaving my sentences suspended in mid-air. While you are near me, please touch me. It is a biological need."

She said once a resident's boundaries have been established in his new quarters, they should not be changed without serious consideration given to the effect the move will have on the resident.

Homes should also provide

responsibilities, with "something to occupy minds and hands and give a role of usefulness."

"If I'm not interested in arts and crafts, let me shell peas or play the role of postmistress or librarian," she said.

In addition, Mrs. McIver said nursing homes should relax visiting hour restrictions.

"The absence of visitors is a blow to a resident's self-esteem. It indicates no one cares," she said. "Invite children and let me share my accumulated knowledge."

She said it isn't true that nursing homes don't have the time or money for such "frills."

"An enrichment of the environment only requires better planning. It isn't a traditional hospital we want for the aged, but a home."

Labor board decides to hear argument calling for vote

The Saskatchewan Labor Relations Board (SLRB) has decided to hear argument for a vote to determine whether there is majority support among Star-Phoenix editorial staff employees for the Saskatchewan Newspaper Guild to become their certified bargaining agent.

The ruling was made Wednesday following a request Tuesday from lawyer Dave Beaubien to represent at the

hearing, employees who had signed a petition asking the board to authorize a vote on the matter.

Board chairman Clifford Peet said the ruling grants Mr. Beaubien "limited status," which allows him to argue for a vote.

The "limited status" does not include the right to examine or cross-examine witnesses, according to the board's decision.

Mr. Peet also said the board has agreed not to attach any weight to evidence submitted to it concerning any related matter which transpired after March 4, the date the union's certification application was filed.

The SLRB takes the position the views of the employees must remain confidential, and will not allow evidence to be tendered during the hearing on support or non-support for the union, he said.

The Saskatchewan Newspaper Guild, Local 234, has applied to become the certified bargaining agent for about 50 Star-Phoenix editorial department employees including editors, reporters, photographers, copy persons, librarians and receptionists.

Mr. Beaubien said during Tuesday's session a notice of intervention in the union's certification application on behalf of petitioning employees was sent to the board April 8.

The majority of Wednesday's hearing was dominated by argument on the status of the



VERA McIVER
... director of hospital services

Hall stresses responsibility

The responsibility of meeting the needs of the aged rests with the citizens in an elderly person's community, says Mr. Justice Emmet Hall.

Mr. Justice Hall told delegates to the Saskatchewan Association of Special Care Homes' annual convention Wednesday night that to this end, no citizen is or can be exempt.

"Part of the history of almost every worthwhile effort is that they have originated at the community level, almost totally by volunteers," he said. "Governments might assume the funding of various programs, but they seldom initiate the development."

He said once the state accepts the responsibility of a program, a professional group must be recruited and supported. This group, he said, usually emanates from the volunteers interested in the development from the outset.

"The days of isolated service and concern are past," Mr. Jus-

tice Hall said. "We must aim for an integration of services."

"All separate facets related to special care must be brought under one umbrella of service if we are to render overall service on a real basis."

He said the problems involved with the increasing rate of elderly people in Canada are not limited to the biological sciences and medicine.

"Too often, he said, the public associates problems of the elderly with the medical profession.

"They (elderly) have as many social and economic problems, if not more," he said. "While the problems may differ in intensity, they are the same the world over. All senior citizens require the same commodities such as food, clothing and shelter. They also require emotional sustenance and self-esteem."

The convention, attended by nearly 500 delegates from various centres in the province, concludes today.

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