

**The Superior Court**  
**County of Los Angeles**  
**Mental Health Department**

ADDRESS REPLY TO:  
ROOM 1012 — 205 S. BROADWAY  
LOS ANGELES 12, CALIFORNIA

November 13, 1950.

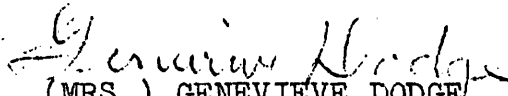
Honorable Board of Supervisors,  
501 Hall of Records,  
Los Angeles, California.

Subject: Annual Report.

Gentlemen:

The Mental Health Department of the Superior Court  
submits herewith its annual report for the fiscal year  
1949-50.

Respectfully yours,

  
(MRS.) GENEVIEVE DODGE  
Counselor in Mental Health.

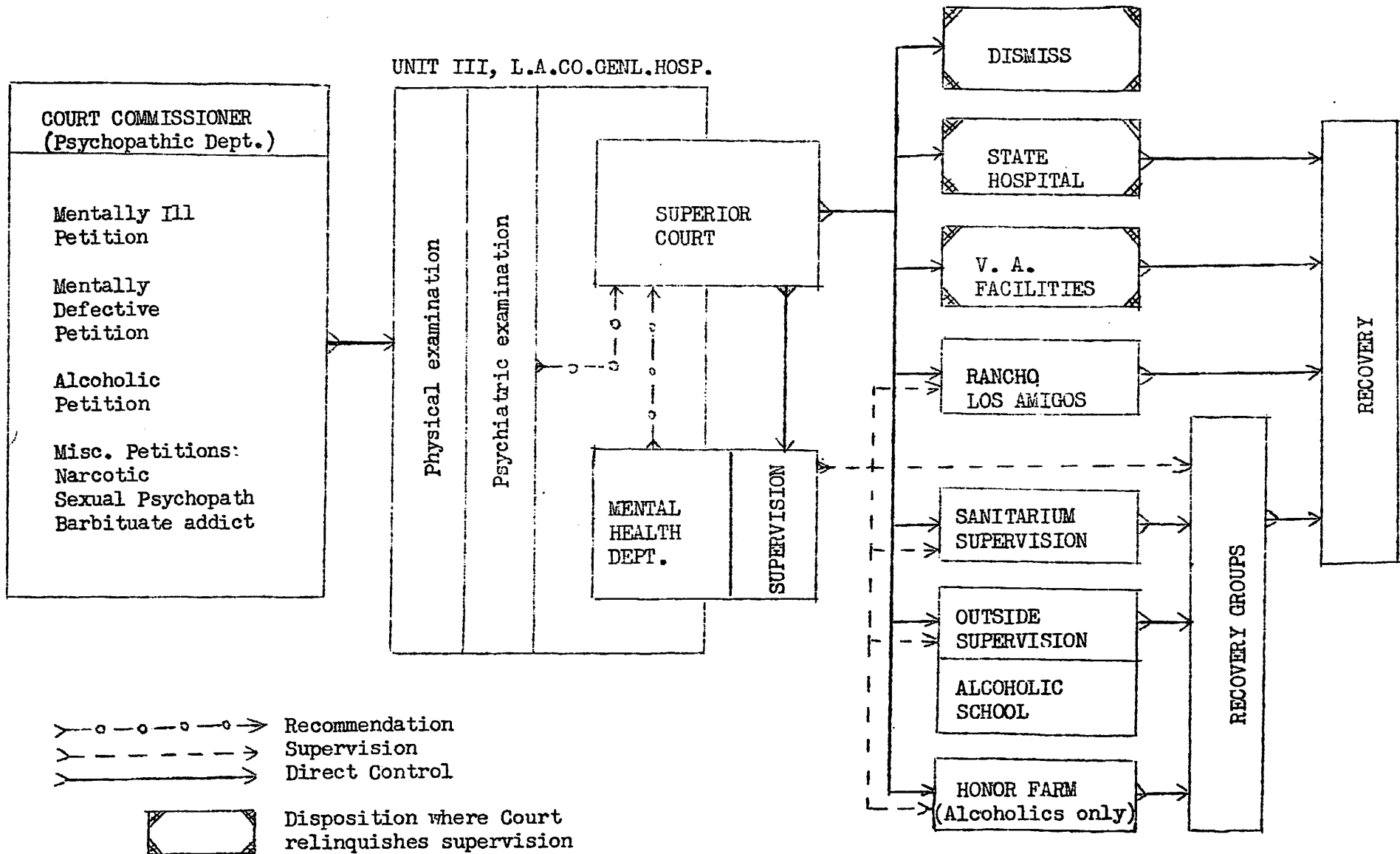
## INTRODUCTION

During the fiscal year of 1949-50, the Mental Health Department has continued its functioning as an agent of the Superior Court under authority of the California Welfare and Institutions Code. Representatives of the Department interview all patients who have been admitted to the Los Angeles County General Hospital for observation in the Psychopathic Unit because of suspected mental illness, alcoholism, sexual psychopathy or other disorders specified in the Code. Social histories were prepared on 6591 new cases. These histories not only provide a point of departure for constructive social work and often assist in both diagnosis and treatment of the patients, but in addition as the basis for the statistical evaluations contained in this annual report constitute a background against which constructive community planning may be accomplished.

In addition to the preparation of the histories, the Counselors assisted relatives and friends in making plans for care of the patients. Each patient was accompanied by a Counselor at the time of his Court hearing. As representatives of the Court, Counselors supervised placement of patients when jurisdiction was retained by the Court and generally supervised activities of the patients while undergoing care and treatment. Following successful treatment, assistance has been provided for rehabilitation.

The progress of a mentally ill patient within this County and the role played by the Mental Health Department is illustrated on the following page.

PROGRESS OF A MENTALLY ILL PATIENT — COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES



Mental Health Dept., County of Los Angeles, April 1950

## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The responsibilities and obligations of the Mental Health Department both to the County and the people who dwell within it have gone far beyond the specific items prescribed by the Welfare and Institutions Code. Diagnosis, Hospitalization and treatment from a medical and psychiatric point of view has become but a small part of our total endeavor. Insofar as the press of work permits, the past year has shown a continued emphasis upon preventive and community programs in the sincere belief that such a procedure is eventually less costly and certainly a more intelligent and humane approach than extended and often permanent hospitalization.

Each person who is restored to his place in the community after a period of illness is a human and economic achievement, surpassed only by those people who are prevented from becoming ill in the first place. During the year our preventive program has been characterized by the widespread dissemination of the concept that early recognition and treatment of mental illness is far more effective than care after the illness has become severe. As shown in the programs outlined below, conscientious effort has been made to develop this thesis.

During 1949-50 our community programs have included: Recovery Groups, Alcoholic School, Talks by members of the Staff, Committee Work, and an Open House held at the Psychopathic Unit of the County Hospital, jointly sponsored by the hospital Staff and the Mental Health Department.

Recovery Groups.--

In Los Angeles County two non-profit sanitariums provide

many governmental and privately sponsored committees. These include:

Committee on Psychopathic Affairs of the L.A.  
County Bar Assn.

Committee on Needs of the Aging

Advisory Council of Resthaven

Council on Alcoholism

State Legislature's Interim Committee on Public  
Health

Sanitarium Association of California.

Between January and June of 1950, a member of this Department "acted as liason officer between the Board of Supervisors and The Survey Group" of The Section on Alcoholic Studies, Laboratory of Applied Physiology, Yale University. The University prepared a survey of alcoholism in the County and prepared a report giving problems and recommendations. This work was ordered by the Board of Supervisors and has been reported to that body directly by the University.\*

Open House--

In May, 1950, the Staff of the Psychopathic Unit of the Los Angeles County General Hospital cooperated with the Mental Health Department in an open house at the hospital in observance of National Mental Health Week. The objective was to acquaint all interested people with the procedures of the Court, the hospital, and the Mental Health Department. While admittance to Court hearings is always available to the public, specific efforts were made to permit approximately a hundred visitors to see the Court in action and to develop a more intimate

\*Alcoholism in Los Angeles County: Problems and Recommendations, Yale University, New Haven, 1950.

acquaintance with the various phases of caring for the mentally ill and the specific part played by the Mental Health Department.

#### Alcoholic School--

During the past fiscal year, a group meeting has been held each Wednesday evening. These meetings are conducted by a member of the Department and are attended by alcoholic patients who have received sanitarium care or who were placed directly on outside supervision by the Court.

Alcoholic school has constituted one of our focal points in approaching the problem of each of these patients on a group therapy level. Each member of the school is invited to discuss his or her difficulties and problems as related to alcoholism. Discussions are held and the resultant mutual exchange of ideas and advice have brought about noticeable improvements in the attitude of patients towards their alcoholic problems.

Attendance on a group basis has been greatly facilitated by the cooperation of the Superior Court in making a courtroom in the Civic Center available to use for meetings. This central location and the ease with which it can be reached by public transportation has brought the facilities of the school to a large group of alcoholics.

With the operation of the school during the past year on a voluntary basis, no formal records of attendance have been kept. The benefits to patients are of such worth, however, that plans are being formulated for the administration of Court supervision through the school. These plans will provide for an extended period of supervision after sanitarium care, to be accomplished by attendance at the Alcoholic School.

No report of the efforts made by the Mental Health Department in the realm of Community Programs would be complete without a report of the services extended to the Department by other agencies in this area.

#### Alcoholics Anonymous--

Two alcoholic workers attend Court sessions daily to establish initial contact with alcoholics. The organization attempts to make available to each alcoholic patient the benefits of Alcoholics Anonymous. While no record of activities is kept which is in keeping with the spirit of anonymity of the organization, the Court workers estimate that at least 40% of all contacted alcoholics later attend AA meetings. In addition to the Court contact, each case is referred to the central office of the organization and a home call is made.

All patients sent to sanitariums and institutions are contacted individually by AA workers. A determined effort is made to achieve continuous contact with the emphasis placed on the date of release. Bi-weekly meetings are conducted in all institutions and sanitariums.

The Court workers believe that 40% of all alcoholics contacted recover in that they attain sobriety. In addition 40% "slip" but usually obtain a degree of sobriety. The balance of 20% are chronic permanent alcoholics and seemingly do not recover.

#### Jewish Committee for Personal Service--

This Agency accompanied patients or their friends and families at Court hearings in about 216 cases during the year. The Committee provides counseling and other aspects of social work for families of patients and upon invitation offers its services to patients themselves either in State Hospitals or

private sanitariums and is of exceptional value to the work of the Court as a community resource.

American Legion--

The Service Department of the American Legion has installed a full-time Service Representative and a stenographer in the Psychopathic Unit of the County Hospital to provide service to veterans in that Unit. These employees of the Legion provide a multitude of services, not only to the veteran patient, but also to his family and friends as well as to the Court. An estimated 60% of veterans have relatives or friends who seek advice and information from the Service Representative.

Although certain statistical data are presented in Table I, it must not be overlooked that the benefits of the type of service rendered by the Legion is not measurable in terms of numbers of veterans processed, forms accomplished, or any other countable items.

Information relative to the veterans military or naval history is secured by the Counselors and turned over to the Service Representative for processing with the Veterans' Administration. The Legion undertakes the filing of claims of various sorts and the official clearance of those veterans who can receive care in the Veteran's Administration's Neuro-psychiatric Hospital at Brentwood. Table I shows the breakdown of these activities based on the Legion's fiscal year of September 1, 1949 to August 31, 1950.



TABLE I.

ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN LEGION SERVICE DEPARTMENT AT  
 UNIT III, LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL FOR  
 FISCAL YEAR SEPTEMBER 1, 1949 TO AUGUST 31, 1950.  
 SHOWING SERVICES RENDERED AND DISPOSITION OF VETERANS.

Committed to State Hospitals	614
Committed to Veterans Facility	98
Granted Sanitarium Supervision	72
Granted Rancho Supervision	19
Granted Outside Supervision	12
Dismissed	<u>8</u>
Total number of veterans on whom claims were filed	823
Veterans processed but on whom no claims were filed because of refusal to cooperate, prior power of attorney granted elsewhere, dishonorable discharges, peacetime service only, guardianship cases, etc.	<u>494</u>
TOTAL NUMBER OF VETERANS 1317	

In addition to the above, the American Legion Service Department initiated more than 2200 various types of actions for veterans.

## SANITARIUM PROGRAM -- THE AGED

The Welfare and Institutions Code prohibits commitment to State Hospitals of the aged who can receive custodial care elsewhere. The result is that the tremendous burden of providing care for the aged is an ever-increasing County problem.

Elderly patients compose the largest group of the mentally ill and their number is constantly increasing, coincident with the general aging of the population as the result of geriatric advances and the increase of population in the County. Table II demonstrates the continuous increase in the number of aged patients appearing before the Court, by years, for the five years ending with the current fiscal year. Table III graphically illustrates that fiscal year 1949-50 has shown a continued acceleration in the incidence of mental illness greatly exceeding the rate of population growth of the County. It shows further how the incidence of cases of patients over age 60 is increasing at a much greater rate than either incidence of mental illness as a whole or population growth.

Table IV shows disposition made of the aged patients during the year from this County. Careful examination will indicate the relatively small numbers of aged patients committed to State Hospitals. It must be noted that this table reports on new cases only. During the year a total of 510 rehearings were held by the Court for all age groups. Rehearings cover cases where the patient could not adjust either outside an institution or while with his or her own family.

The large number of aged requiring placement constitutes a never ending and as yet unsolved problem. The wards of the

Psychopathic Unit of the Los Angeles County General Hospital are constantly overcrowded, at times critically so, because of the necessity of holding patients when no other facility for their care is available.

TABLE II

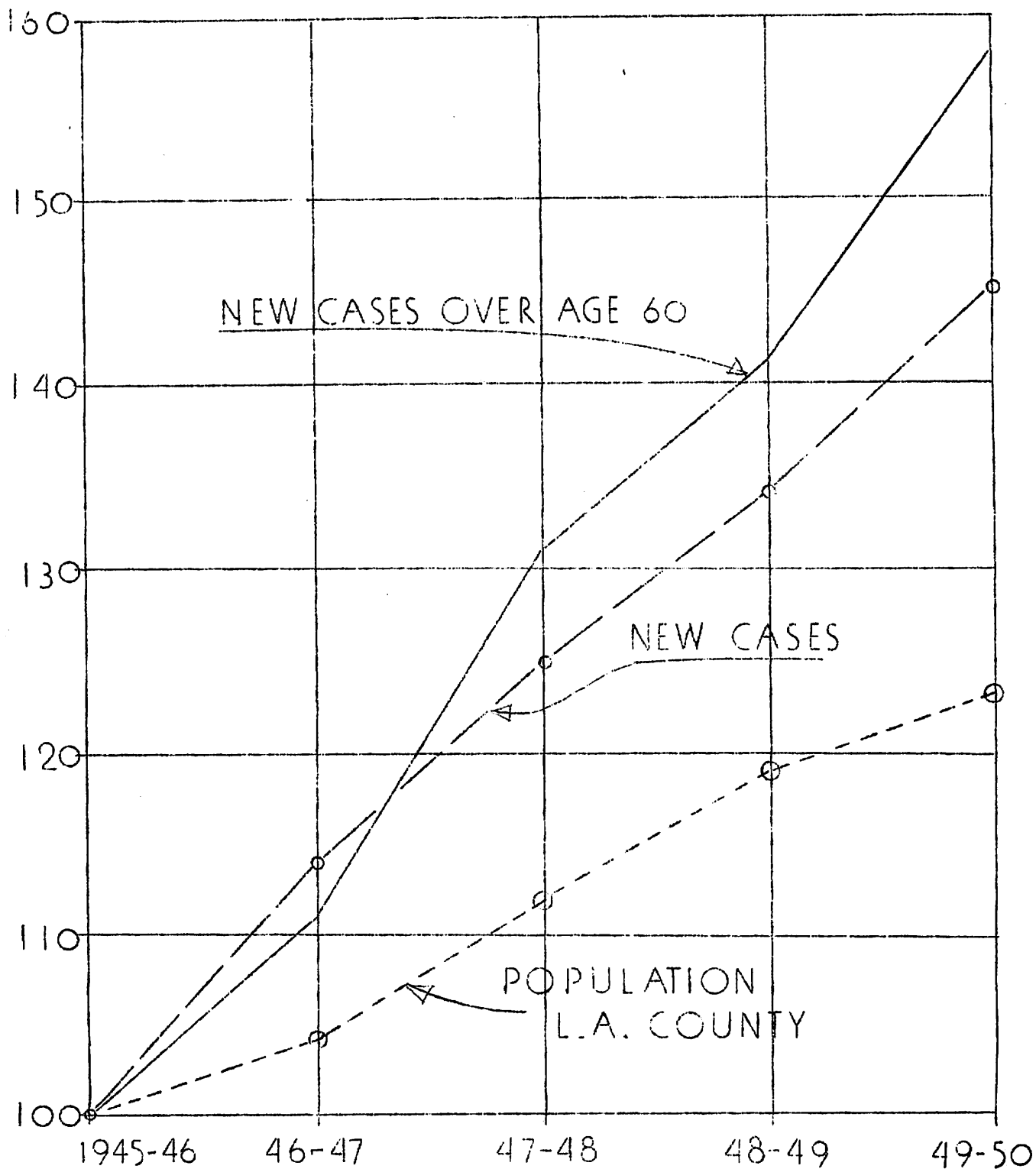
NUMBER OF AGED MENTAL AND STIMULANT PATIENTS  
 APPEARING BEFORE THE PSYCHOPATHIC COURT.  
 NEW CASES ONLY.

Fiscal Year	Ages 60 to 64				Ages 65 and over				Totals
	Men		Women		Men		Women		
	Ment.	Stim.	Ment.	Stim.	Ment.	Stim.	Ment.	Stim.	
1945-46	96	16	92	2	500	17	627	2	1352
1946-47	112	29	118	4	556	19	692	5	1535
1947-48	123	31	150	3	658	8	837	3	1813
1948-49	156	25	152	10	798	11	890	3	2045
1949-50	200	35	166	13	854	9	904	5	2186

CHART *Showing*

NEW PSYCHOPATHIC CASES  
 NEW PSYCHOPATHIC CASES OVER AGE 60  
 POPULATION LOS ANGELES COUNTY

INDEX 1945-46 = 100



**TABLE IV.**  
**REPORT OF DISPOSITION OF AGED PATIENTS, PSYCHOPATHIC COURT, LOS ANGELES COUNTY**  
**FISCAL YEAR 1949-1950**

**NEW MENTAL CASES ONLY**

	Total Cases Heard	Age 60-65 Heard	Age 60-65 Super- vision	Age 60-65 Dis- missed	Age 60-65 Com- mitted	Age 66 and over Heard	Age 66 and over Super- vision	Age 66 and over Dismissed	Age 66 and over Committed.
July	369	28	12	2	14	141	109	3	29
August	446	25	13	0	12	165	138	0	27
September	434	38	14	0	24	137	116	0	21
October	408	25	10	0	15	133	107	0	26
November	406	20	10	0	10	142	117	1	24
December	436	26	9	1	16	143	125	2	16
January	486	33	15	2	16	174	145	6	23
February	404	32	18	0	14	124	108	5	11
March	543	45	31	1	13	180	152	9	19
April	409	22	10	0	12	137	124	1	12
May	417	33	18	1	14	78	64	0	14
June	476	36	15	1	20	160	146	4	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>5234</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>1714</b>	<b>1451</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>232</b>
Percentages of Total Cases Heard									
	6.9	3.4	.1	3.4	32.7	27.7	.6	4.4	
Percentages of Age Group 60 yrs. and Older Heard.									
	17.8	8.5	.4	8.6	82.2	69.9	1.5	11.1	

**SUMMARY:**

OF ALL NEW CASES HEARD OVER 60 YEARS OF AGE:

78.4% Were granted sanitarium supervision

1.9% Were dismissed

19.7% Were committed to State Hospitals

Total 100.0%

This alarming situation is a reflection of the lack of adequate facilities either public or private, to provide the care our aged citizens require. Provided space for the aged mildly mentally ill patients at Rancho Los Amigos, is, and has been for many years, filled to absolute capacity. Furthermore, the number of private facilities within the County are inadequate. Table V shows the extent to which the Mental Health Department has utilized these private facilities. The data shows the picture as of the last day of the fiscal year.

During the fiscal year, an approximate 250 new beds were made available for County patients by the private sanitariums in the community. These beds were promptly filled, but the situation became so critical that on June 29, 1950, the General Hospital Administrator made arrangements for the temporary care of fifty chronic harmless mental cases in Unit One of the Hospital. (Note: following this, and during fiscal year 1950-51, through an arrangement with the State Department of Mental Hygiene, seventy patients were transferred from Rancho Los Amigos to State Mental Hospitals caring for the mentally defective. Patients were then transferred from the ward in Unit One to Rancho. At the date of this writing, October 13, 1950, 53 patients are awaiting placement in sanitariums or Rancho from the Psychopathic Wards.)

TABLE V.

UTILIZATION OF PRIVATE FACILITIES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
FOR THE CARE OF SENILE PATIENTS  
AS OF JUNE 30, 1950

Number of patients in sanitariums  
as of June 30, 1950, including only  
those patients over 60 years of age  
who are under supervision of the  
Mental Health Dept.

1746

Capacity of private sanitariums in  
Los Angeles County which accept senile  
patients -- according to list of  
licensed institutions issued by Dept.  
of Mental Hygiene for fiscal year end-  
ing June 30, 1950. (This figure is  
approximate only because of inclusion  
of one private institution which is not  
listed but which is licensed. The  
figure also includes one sanitarium  
in Orange County.)

3012

Percentage of available beds occupied  
by court committed aged patients.

57.9%



## Rehabilitation--

Recognizing that the goal of all treatment is to implement the return of the mentally ill person to a normal home and a good community adjustment, the Department has continued in its policy of providing intensive short treatment programs. Three private sanitariums, two of them non-profit in nature, have made their facilities available for rehabilitary work. These institutions have skilled psychiatric staffs to provide the care and treatment required.

Mention must be made of splendid attitude shown by these sanitariums and the members of their staffs by their close and continued cooperation with the Mental Health Department and their facilitation of the early return of their patients to their rightful place in the community. As of the end of the fiscal year, a total of 34 patients were in process of receiving rehabilitary care by means of County funds.

Resthaven continues to hold a vital place in the community and the work of the Mental Health Department accepting women with mild mental disorders from 15 to 55 years of age for treatment and rehabilitation. This Community Chest resource is an open, homelike sanitarium with consulting psychologist, 11 attending psychiatrists, 3 internists and a dentist serving voluntarily. With an active treatment program, aided by modern therapies and assisted in their home and business readjustment by an Advisory Council and State Vocational participation, these patients return to independent living in an average of 47 days. This program demonstrates both the human and economic value of early treatment *vs. delay* and long hospitalization.

REPORT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE SUMMER SCHOOL OF ALCOHOLISM  
AT YALE UNIVERSITY.

A representative of this Department was authorized, by action of the Board of Supervisors, to participate in the Summer School of Alcoholic Studies conducted by and at Yale University at New Haven, Connecticut. The overall purpose of the study was to acquaint all participants with the modern views concerning the origin and treatment of alcoholism.

Notes and literature taken and made available to our representative will provide the basis for an in-service training program designed for the staff of the Mental Health Department. This material will finally be condensed into a manual for use by the members of this Department.

It is anticipated that the utilization of information gained at Yale will result in particular effort being placed on the assistance of the alcoholic who has either been released from a period of sanitarium care or who has been placed on outside supervision by the Court. It is felt that an increase in group activities as exemplified by our Alcoholic School together with more contacts with the home and the alcoholic's relatives would provide the most effective and least expensive way to deal with the problem.

One of the specific results of the Yale Summer School has been a revamping of procedures in that all of our Counselors participate in the preparation of alcoholic case histories and their presentation in Court. Hitherto, this work had been confined to one or two Counselors. The necessity for spreading our work and case load has been a principal causative factor in this. However, it has been found that the Counselors benefit greatly by the experience and can consequently handle the problems of alcoholics in

the various sanitariums with considerably more understanding and competency.

#### THE MENTALLY DEFECTIVE.

The Mental Health Department has continued in its assistance in the preparation of applications for admission of mentally defective adults to Pacific Colony. It acts, in addition, as a center for individuals and organizations seeking information relative to Pacific Colony admissions. It is the responsibility of this Department to process all applications for individuals over eighteen years of age either before or after appearance of the person in Court. The mentally defective person must ordinarily be maintained in his or her own home until admission to Pacific Colony is granted. However, in many instances, the presence of a defective person in the home is inimical and often hazardous to others, particularly small children. When the situation can not be handled at home, temporary placements are made under County supervision.

At the present time we await vacancies for about 102 mentally defective individuals. An additional ten defectives are cared for at Rancho Los Amigos pending their admission to the State Hospital because of the inability of their relatives to provide care elsewhere.

## STATISTICS.

The tables following show that portion of the work of the Department which can be reported statistically. The complexity of factors involved, social and economic, to mention but two, together with the lack of means to demonstrate social progress prohibit a report of progress and accomplishments in the important fields of prevention, development of individual awareness, Community participation, etc.

Table VI shows the new cases heard in the Psychopathic Court during 1949-50 and records the disposition made.

(Note: Throughout this report for statistical purposes, cases involving sexual psychopathy, mental defectiveness, and chronic sexual offenses are gathered together with those involving mental illness. Similarly, the term Stimulant includes cases involving alcoholics, narcotics, and addiction to barbiturates.)

Table VII shows the supervision case load of the Mental Health Department and how it has changed during the year. The distribution of placements is shown on Table VIII as of the last day of the fiscal year.

TABLE VI.

NEW CASES HEARD IN PSYCHOPATHIC COURT FISCAL YEAR 1949-50  
SHOWING DISPOSITIONS MADE.

		MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
NEW CASES HEARD	Mental	2600	2644	5244
	Stimulant	1084	257	1341
	Total	3684	2901	6585
NEW CASES PLACED UNDER SUPERVISION	Mental	1088	1263	2351
	Stimulant	185	62	247
	Total	1273	1325	2598
NEW CASES DISMISSED AT HEARING	Mental	106	73	179
	Stimulant	63	27	90
	Total	169	100	269
COMMITTED TO STATE HOSPITALS & VETERANS' FACILITY	Mental	1406	1308	2714
	Stimulant	836	168	1004
	Total	2242	1476	3718

TABLE VII

CASE LOAD MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
FISCAL YEAR 1949-50.

		MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
UNDER SUPERVISION 7-1-49	Mental	1097	1839	2936
	Stimulant	531	166	697
	Total	1628	2005	3623
PLUS NEW CASES PLACED ON SUPERVISION. FISCAL YEAR 1949-50	Mental	1088	1263	2351
	Stimulant	185	58	243
	Total	1273	1321	2594
LESS CASES DISCHARGED OR DECEASED.	Mental	685	765	1450
	Stimulant	358	14	372
	Total	1043	777	1822
LESS CASES COMMITTED FROM SUPERVISION	Mental	84	144	228
	Stimulant	72	18	90
	Total	156	162	318
RESULTING IN UNDER SUPERVISION 6-30-50	Mental	1416	2193	3609
	Stimulant	286	192	478
	Total	1702	2387	4089

TABLE VIII

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
PLACEMENTS AS OF JUNE 30, 1950.

	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Sanitariums	697	1149	1846
Rancho Los Amigos	423	221	644
Harbor Hospital	0	46	46
Los Angeles County General Hospital	12	44	56
Outside Supervision	<u>570</u>	<u>927</u>	<u>1497</u>
TOTAL	1702	2387	4089

## FINANCIAL

The Mental Health Department has continued to handle all matters pertaining to the protection and use of income and assets of patients under supervision. Patients' funds are used for their best interests. Sanitariums are paid for services rendered, either from the patient's money, from contributions made by relatives or friends, by insurance, or by the County. Each case is subjected to an investigation to determine mode of payment.

During 1949-50 accounts totaling \$219,266.72 were verified for Court approval and payments made from bedgeted funds. \$213,661.66 of this sum was paid private sanitariums for board and care and the balance of \$5,605.06 was spent for other necessary items such as clothing, professional services, prescriptions, dressings, etc.

Dollowing Court orders for sanitarium care, an immediate, though often tentative, financial plan is made subject to revision following investigation. The investigatory activities of the Department have resulted in a collection of \$62,083.67 during the year, which was placed initially in trust accounts.

Of this sum, \$14,556.67 was transferred in the General Fund and \$1,504.65 turned over to the Bureau of Resources and Collections to apply towards reimbursement of care given mentally ill patients at the General Hospital.

Trust funds are maintained with the County Auditor in instances where patients have nominal amounts of money but no need for legal guardianship exists. Administration of these funds is directed towards providing the patients with their needs. As of the end of the year, trust accounts had a total balance of \$27,396.78.



Table IX shows the expenditures made by the County from bedgeted funds during the year broken down by months and showing the cost to the County on the basis of patient days.

TABLE IX.

MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXPENDITURES FROM  
BUDGETED FUNDS FOR BOARD & CARE & OTHER ITEMS.

	Board & Care	Other Items	Total	No. of Patients	Patient Days	Board & Care Only. Cost/Pt. Per Day.
1949						
July	\$10812.93	\$ 74.10	\$10887.03	340	9364	1.15
Aug.	12291.55	159.74	12451.29	355	9813	1.25
Sept.	12556.97	353.52	12910.49	364	9748	1.29
Oct.	10777.20	217.70	10994.90	346	9616	1.13
Nov.	12756.58	144.26	12900.84	357	9959	1.27
Dec.	13312.27	271.40	13583.67	377	10551	1.26
1950						
Jan.	14473.37	361.58	14834.95	425	11271	1.28
Feb.*	20820.09	57.62	20877.71	468	13024	1.60
Mar.	24994.75	1127.35	26122.10	535	14749	1.69
Apr.	26188.92	222.85	26411.77	559	14868	1.76
May	26614.84	823.72	27438.56	551	15704	1.63
June	28062.19	1791.22	29853.41	575	15859	1.76
	\$ 21366.66	\$ 5605.06	\$219266.72		144526	1.52

\* On 2-17-50 a new rate of \$139.00 was authorized by the Board of Supervisors to care for patients requiring hospital-type care. At the same time, the rate for special care (bed) patients was increased from \$93.00 to \$105.00 per month.