

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA GUILTY OF GROSS WRONG IN HARASSMENT OF FAMILIES OF SICK

Hospital	Patients	State Budget	Patient Fees	Per Capita Cost	Patient Cost
Dix	2,579	\$7,819,666	\$1,158,570	\$3,595	\$558
Broughton	2,250	6,768,698	1,115,180	3,589	646
West Carolina	698	4,107,792	380,480	5,043	453
Cherry	2,461	7,632,185	574,255	5,140	367
O'Berry	1,175	4,014,385	233,496	3,562	317
Umstead	1,800	5,895,015	860,000	3,793	890
Murdoch	1,521	5,656,578	475,928	4,072	375
Caswell	1,800	5,389,089	488,935	3,343	349
Wright	21	206,196	19,450	10,475	926
TOTALS	12,305	\$47,489,600	\$5,206,294	*\$4,764	*\$531

* Averages

by Jack Rider

This month the families of those unfortunate 14,305 patients in the state's mental hospitals had a painful injury added to the greivous suffering they already bear.

This came in the form of a mimeographed letter informing them that the charge for patients was being boosted by over 342 per cent!

The charge per patient day

was being skyrocketed from \$3.50 per day to \$12 per day, and without prior notice, legislative act or announcement by the governor's office.

Four years ago the state department of mental health, in one of its moments of poor mental health decided to increase the burden of those families unlucky enough to have a patient in any of the state's mental hospitals. This was another of

those silently voted, unpublicized low blows at people who had already suffered more than their fair share in having a family member with a congenital mental problem or mental sickness later in life.

When this venture into caloused fiscal affairs landed in the laps of unsuspecting people in every corner of the state they were frightened and then madened to be billed for many

years of so-called past-due payments on an account they did not know was running and for a service they thought their tax dollar was underwriting.

Individuals received bills in the tens of thousands of dollars for brothers, sisters, children, or parents who had been in state institutions for many years.

As bad as this first blow was it was nothing to compare with this year's more than tripling of this charge.

This tabulation included with this article shows how varied and how ineffective this official harassment of unfortunate citizens really is.

Out of a total state budget appropriation of \$47,489,600 for the present fiscal year the nine mental hospitals and schools anticipate additional income of \$5,206,295 from families of the patients making a total budget of \$52,693,894.

his reflects that 9.8 per cent of the operating costs of these nine institutions is underwritten by these payments for patients. But there is a wide variation in the rate of payments per hospital, with patients at Broughton have 14.1 per cent of the operating costs of the hospital under-

written by their payments ranging down to O'Berry Center where payments for patients account for just 5.4 per cent of the total operating costs.

But the variation from hospital to hospital within the nine facilities of the department of mental health is not the crux of the matter, which is the general taxation while called upon to underwrite other public hospitals and correctional institutions does not carry the total load in the mental institutions.

Gravelly Sanitorium at Chapel Hill collects \$24,400 from patients on a \$947,443 budget, Eastern North Carolina Sanitorium collects \$108,000 from patients on a budget of \$2,186,007, Western North Carolina Sanitorium collects from patients \$130,050 on a budget of \$1,775,129, North Carolina Sanitorium collects \$174,600 on a budget of \$1,888,184, North Carolina Cerebral Palsy Hospital collects \$500 from patients on a budget of \$347,515, North Carolina Orthopedic Hospital collects nothing from patients on a budget of \$824,501.

All of which points up the inconsistency of overall state policy which penalizes the parents or family of one unfortunate patient while patronizing some other unfortunate's parents or family.

Most basically the most wrong with the entire business of charging some, harassing others and not charging other is that when it becomes the majority feeling of the citizenry and its elected leaders that government should move into a given field of service; then those services should be provided from the general revenues and if the elective leaders feel there is not sufficient revenue to provide such services then this should be made known to the people.

Harassing the families of patients in mental hospitals with bills they cannot possibly pay and daily charges that are absurd on their face is unbecoming to a government that operates with a fat surplus and at present is collecting in excess of \$10 million dollars more per month above its revenues for the same month last year (the August report of Revenue Commissioner I. L. Clayton reports August collections as being an increase of \$10,030,206 over August of '69). Not much more than half of this single month's increased revenues would wipe out this inequity and insult that is added to the injury more than 14,000 families have suffered at the hands of nature which has given them mentally disturbed or mental retarded children.

To charge a parent such a fee as \$12 per day in such a circumstance is comparable to sending a bereaved parent a board bill for a child who has gone astray and been sent to prison.

There is the further reflection that the small per cent of families who do make the sacrifice and try to meet these arbitrarily fixed fees also pay high personal taxes which are in turn used to pay for the full costs of those patients whose families either cannot or will not make any effort in this direction.

There is this further reflection: That \$12 per day adds up to \$4,380 per year and only three of the state institutions for mental diseases is spending that much money on each patient, as the tabulation with this article shows.

Viewed from every angle the state's position in this business is unfair, unreasonable and unnecessary.

THE JONES COUNTY JOURNAL

NUMBER 15 TRENTON, N. C., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1970 VOLUME XVII

Jones County's Ninth Traffic Death In 1970 Claims Charles D. Thigpen

An accident Saturday night on Rural Paved Road 1300 six miles west of Trenton caused the ninth traffic death of the year in Jones County.

Patrolman C. W. Oakley says 37 year-old Charles Douglas Thigpen of Trenton route 2 died in the single-car accident.

Thigpen's car hit a bridge across Trent River, knocking some 40 feet of the wooden bridge railing off and plunging the car into the river.

It is estimated that the accident took place at about 3:30 a.m. Sunday, but the discovery of the wreckage did not come until about 7 Sunday morning.

Jones County Coroner George Davenport says it is his opinion that Thigpen was killed in the crash and did not die from drowning.

SWINSON ON USS SEATTLE

Navy Petty Officer Third Class Larry L. Swinson, of Pollocksville, departed Norfolk, Va., on August 27, 1970, for the Mediterranean aboard the fast combat support ship USS Seattle. By means of the latest ship-to-ship transfer systems, the Seattle will transfer over nine million gallons of liquid fuels and five thousand tons of cargo, ammunition and missiles to ships operating with the Sixth Fleet.

WADSWORTH IN VIETNAM

Corporal William R. Wadsworth, of Route 1, Trenton, participated in Operation Barrren Green while serving with the First Marine Battalion in Vietnam. The mission was conducted about 17 miles southwest of Danang to curb enemy harvest operations.

JUVENILES JUGGED

Three runaway juveniles from Atlanta were picked up by Lenoir County officers over the weekend and held for their parents as well as being charged with non-felonious breaking and entering. They were Iris Lynn Shelton, Brenda Lee Sergeant and Daniel James Sergeant.

Open House at State University October 10th

Exhibits illustrating the many phases of agriculture, life sciences and forestry will be the focal point of an Open House program at North Carolina State University Saturday, October 10.

The Open House is the 12th annual program of the School of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the School of Forest Resources. High school students, their advisors, parents and teachers from the Tar Heel state's 100 counties are expected to attend.

Exhibits in Reynolds Coliseum will illustrate the programs of study available in the two school's 23 departments. Visitors can see how soils are used to remove impurities from our water supply; look inside the stomach of a steer watch a demonstration of the process of converting wood to paper; and learn how bacteria are used to produce the food we eat.

The students can also visit with University administrators and faculty members for information on entrance requirements and financial aid. N. C. State students will be available to answer campus life and student activities.

Registration will begin at 10:30 a.m. in Reynolds Coliseum and the exhibits will remain open until 3 p.m. Faculty members will be on hand in various departments of the two schools after registration to answer questions.

The day's program will end with the N. C. State Wolfpack football team meeting East Carolina University at Carter Stadium. Tickets for the game at a reduced price will be available for visitors registering during the Open House.

Gilbert Reunion

The 39th annual reunion of the Jones County branch of the Gilbert family is to be held Sunday at hady Grove Methodist Church in Jones County and all members of that numerous clan are urged to arrive on time at 1 p.m. and to come as usual, armed with that well-filled picnic basket.

One Divorce, Two Debt Suits Filed In Jones Courts

Jones County Court Clerk Rogers Pollock reports three civil actions having been filed in his office during the past week, including one divorce suit and two suits for alleged debts.

In the divorce action Julia Dove Poole asks divorce from James Michael Poole of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania on grounds of more than one year separation. The suit alleges their marriage April 16, 1966, their separation May 29, 1969 and their parentage of two children ages two and three, who are now living with their mother in Jones County.

The debt actions were filed by Southern Discount Company of New Bern against Travis Meadows of Maysville seeking to collect \$333.50 and the other was by Provident Finance Company which asks judgment against Thomas and Elvora Murphy in the amount of \$197.

NOBLES IN ENGLAND

Air Force Sergeant Roy C. Nobles, son of Mrs. Rena Baker of Route 1, Dover, has arrived for duty at Northolt RAF Station, England. Sgt. Nobles is an aircraft maintenance specialist with a unit of the Air Forces in Europe, America's overseas air arm assigned to NATO. The sergeant, who previously served at Alconbury RAF Station, England, is a 1966 graduate of Newbold High School, Dover. His father, Roy W. Mitchell, resides on Route 1, Dover.

Local 1% Sales Tax Collections Listed For August

County	Net Collections
Buncombe	\$245,088.41
Camden	1,806.99
Chowan	11,824.18
Clay	3,670.76
Cumberland	227,264.50
Currituck	4,508.88
Duplin	32,193.61
Durham	214,626.41
Greene	7,348.92
Hertford	25,309.06
Jackson	21,315.45
Jones	3,754.03
Lenoir	79,987.48
Macon	27,696.01
Madison	6,164.48
Mecklenburg	578,274.80
New Hanover	165,381.67
Onslow	76,997.05
Pamlico	4,885.90
Pasquotank	35,535.16
Perquimans	6,290.63
Richmond	47,863.43
Swain	11,993.08
Tyrrell	2,627.84
Watauga	44,933.38
Wayne	93,002.07
Total	\$1,980,344.18

Seven Cases Heard In Court Sessions

During the past week Jones County courts have cleared seven cases from the criminal calendar.

Ronnie Farrow and Theodore Williams Jr. were each given a suspended 18-month jail term and put on probation for five years on payment of a \$100 fine each for receiving stolen property.

James Everette had a one-year jail term suspended for driving while his license was revoked on condition of paying a \$200 fine and remaining on probation two years.

Roland Paylor Jr. paid a \$5 fine and costs for speeding, John DuBose paid costs for operating across the center line, John A. Davis paid a \$10 fine and costs for speeding and William Armstead forfeited a \$140 cash bond he was under for drunken driving and carrying a concealed weapon.