

(3) the community mental health centers program. (The third of these programs is also included in the summary of NIH grants for construction of health research facilities and community mental health centers.)

Although the foregoing represent the major elements of the NIMH effort with a specific service orientation, in the final analysis the improvement of mental health services is the ultimate goal of the entire Institute's activity. For this reason the following information is offered as a summary of the NIMH services activities.

The NIMH effort traverses the varied endeavors of research scientists, clinicians, community agencies, and training institutions. In its substance, the program includes work in the most basic sciences—for example, in biochemistry, genetics, and experimental psychology—along with clinical studies—e.g., of the alcoholic, of the retarded, the delinquent, and the autistic child, together with work designed to translate and apply acquired knowledge to the many areas of service. Reflected here is a recognition by the Institute that if we are to build a continuum of services to enhance the mental health of Americans, we must buttress the effort with a continuum of scientific endeavor—from basic, normative studies of human development to community-based evaluations of new approaches to the care of the severely disturbed. It would hardly profit citizens, for example, if we were to design, plan, and build new facilities to house services without having available the basic knowledge and techniques which are the core of any helping process.

Underlying all of the Institute's varied efforts—from basic research to community consultations—is the endeavor to improve the mental health services required to meet the needs of our citizens. These needs define our goals: to provide knowledge, techniques, and services that will reverse the tide of mental illness and, ultimately, enhance the well-being and productivity of all of our people.

2. Operation

The program of the National Institute of Mental Health is action oriented. Its activities include making inventories of existing resources, planning for provision of adequate mental health services, constructing and staffing community-based centers, supporting training of mental health personnel to provide services, utilizing current knowledge in prevention and treatment, and accelerating basic and clinical research to obtain new knowledge. This work is accomplished through a variety of efforts, administered under the extramural and intramural programs of the Institute, as well as through a number of special offices.

3. History

Although the National Institute of Mental Health officially came into being in 1946, the Federal Government's interest in mental health reaches at least as far back as 1928. At that time a bill was introduced into the Congress to authorize the construction of two hospitals for the confinement and treatment of persons addicted to the use of habit-forming drugs. The act, which was signed into law the following year, created within the Office of the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service a division charged with the administration of the two hospitals and with other responsibilities concerning narcotics, including research, information dissemination, and development