

Dr. WITTSON. Two-way television makes it possible for the professional staffs of the two institutions to join in weekly grand rounds, with patient presentations and staff discussion.

Distinguished visitors who come to lecture at the University of Nebraska College of Medicine in Omaha are also shared with the State hospital via television.

Various medical college personnel frequently use the system to present programs to specific hospital or community groups.

For example, the Six-County Medical Society in the Norfolk area devotes two of its monthly meetings to continuing medical education. These programs are presented by the faculty of the medical college in Omaha, using two-way TV.

Uses for patient service

New and improved patient services are now available at the State hospital, too.

The medical college neurologist spends 1 hour each week observing neurologic examinations, or reading electroencephalograms, thus supplying a much-needed service.

Consultation is also provided in such areas as child psychiatry, speech diagnosis and therapy, statistical methods, and psychosomatic medicine.

Ward administration is considered one of the most effective uses of the system.

There are 27 wards at the State hospital and not enough staff psychiatrists to go around.

To help relieve this shortage a Nebraska Psychiatric Institute psychiatrist began administering wards on television in January of 1964.

The change in patient care and staff attitudes was rapid. Success of the project was beyond expectations.

Today, three medical college psychiatrists administer 10 wards at the State hospital, spending television time each day with both staff and patients.

Forty-three percent of the patients at Norfolk State Hospital are from the Omaha area. Each week about 20 families use television to visit these patients, making it possible to keep the absent member in the family.

Unfortunately, time does not allow description of the many other uses, such as vocational counseling, placement and followup of the patient returned to the Omaha area, coordination of efforts of the welfare agencies working with the patient and his family, the evaluation of new admissions by Nebraska Psychiatric Institute psychiatrists, and the list goes on and on.

Summary

During the few years the system has been in operation its effects have been felt at both local and national levels.

Locally, utilization of the two-way closed circuit television connection is improving the professional climate of Norfolk State Hospital, and improving its patient services.

Nationally, the program is serving as a pilot project, demonstrating the worth of modern methods of communication as a partial solution