

Mr. ROGERS. Our next witness is Dr. Isadore Tuerk, commissioner of mental hygiene, State of Maryland, accompanied by Mr. Harry Schnibbee.

STATEMENT OF DR. ISADORE TUERK, REPRESENTING THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM DIRECTORS; ACCOMPANIED BY HARRY C. SCHNIBBEE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. ROGERS. We are delighted to have you here, gentlemen, and appreciate your presence.

Mr. TUERK. I am Isadore Tuerk, M.D., commissioner, Maryland Department of Mental Hygiene.

I am here today representing the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, and I am accompanied by Mr. Harry C. Schnibbee, executive director of the association.

The members of our association are responsible for the administration of the major portion of the residential and outpatient public mental health programs in the United States. We administer 1,161 treatment facilities, both residential and outpatient. We have under treatment annually 1,500,000 persons.

Last fiscal year the State mental health program directors administered programs funded at \$2.4 billion, which is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times bigger than all other State public health programs combined.

In 31 States the director of the State mental health program is also responsible for administering the treatment program for alcoholics, and virtually all major, public narcotic addict treatment programs are under the administration of our members.

It is from our experience in administering these vast public programs, and especially the alcoholism programs, that I wish to speak today.

Mr. Chairman, in general we endorse and support both the objectives and the specific approach of H.R. 15758.

Alcoholism and drug addiction are serious public health and social problems. The impact of alcoholism in terms of human suffering, physical illness and complications, financial and economic loss, disruption of family life, highway accidents, and suicides, is incalculable.

Physicians and psychiatrists and other professional personnel have only recently begun to involve themselves with the important problem, despite the fact that for some time the American Hospital Association and the American Medical Association have urged that alcoholism be considered a disease and that physicians and general hospitals provide treatment for the alcoholic.

There has been encouraging progress in the treatment of the alcoholic, but still much needs to be learned in coping with this grave disorder. Alcoholism is a chronic illness which cannot be treated exclusively in a hospital setting, and any attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment program must depend upon the availability of a wide variety of treatment facilities, programs, and resources.

Individual psychotherapy, group therapy, antabuse, Alcoholics Anonymous, tranquilizing drugs, general health management, churches, industrial counseling, family group therapy, utilization of family agencies, welfare departments, departments of education,