INTRODUCTION, CONTENT SUMMARIES, AND ARCHIVE LOCATION OF
INFORMATION BULLETINS OF THE NEUROPSYCHIATRY DIVISION IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION
1947-1953

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The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) psychology archives at the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology (CCHP) contain 31 Information Bulletins published by the Department of Medicine and Surgery of the Veterans Administration of the Neuropsychiatry (NP) Division with Psychiatry, Neurology, and Clinical Psychology Sections. In February 2017, these bulletins were scanned by CCHP and are now housed in both original and digital format in the CCHP Special Interest collection. The scanned bulletins are individually listed by year, volume/issue number, and month and may be viewed or downloaded at http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/search/collection/p15960coll1/searchterm/Neuropsychiatry%20Division%20of%20Veterans%20Affairs,%20Information%20Bulletins/field/collec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/title

The first Neuropsychiatry (NP) Division bulletin was published in June 1947, about a year after the establishment of the Department of Medicine and Surgery (DM&S) with divisions representing the major clinical services in VA hospitals. Each NP Division bulletin was sent to psychiatrists, neurologists, and clinical psychologists in VA hospitals and out-patient departments to update them on mental health program development progress, accomplishments, and future planning. The bulletins were also sent to other hospital clinical staff assisting the NP Division in treating veterans with psychiatric problems. Those services included medicine and surgery staff as well as staff in dental, nursing, social work, dietetics, chaplaincy, special services, and volunteer programs. All personnel with responsibilities in treating psychiatric patients were invited to submit information and articles about new or improved programs of care at their hospitals for the NP Division bulletins. These articles were generally featured in a “Reports From the Field” section.

With the establishment of DM&S in 1946, the VA also began forming 13 branch offices to monitor medical care in VA hospitals to be located in Boston (No. 1), New York (No. 2), Philadelphia (No. 3), Roanoke, Virginia (No.4), Atlanta (No.5), Columbus (No. 6), Chicago (No. 7), St. Paul (No. 8), St. Louis, (No. 9), Dallas (No. 10), Seattle (No. 11), San Francisco (No. 12) and Denver (No. 13). Each was to have a branch chief clinical psychiatrist and a chief clinical
psychologist as well as assistant chief positions. Early NP bulletins introduced those branch offices and program activities in articles that were called “Vignettes of Progress.”

Some of these branch office psychiatry and psychology leadership positions had not been filled by the time of another reorganization in 1949 that reduced the 13 branch offices to six area offices in Boston, Washington, Atlanta, St. Louis, St. Paul, and San Francisco. Each had a chief psychiatrist and chief psychologist position.

The term “neuropsychiatry” never had strong support in the VA [see 1953 Bulletin (7,3) April in Attachment 1] and, in September 1948, the NP Division and its bulletins were renamed those of the Psychiatry and Neurology Division, still with Psychiatry, Neurology, and Clinical Psychology Sections. Organization changes re titled divisions as services and the Psychiatry and Neurology Service name was used in these bulletins in October 1953. The bulletins continued one more month until November 1953.

The diversity of the contents in the 645 pages in these bulletins gives a unique snapshot of VA history in documenting mental health leadership and program development after WWII. The diversity of the information, however, also makes it difficult to catalog. Attachment 1 provides a table of contents for all but one bulletin to help find information on topics of interest. Those tables, however, may not always adequately describe the information in a bulletin. Added for each bulletin in Attachment 1 is a sampling of content to help identify topics of interest to VA psychology and mental health historians. It can be noted that no changes were made in summarizing terms and concepts in the bulletins to update them with current terms and usage.

Accompanying all summaries is the individual internet link to access each bulletin for viewing or downloading of the entire issue. The pdf search function of the bulletin can then be used to find key words and names of interest to users of this CCHP collection.

Of all 31 information bulletins in this collection, the May 1952 NP Division issue is unique in that it provides a rather detailed narrative and data base of the NP Division staffing and workload at the beginning of FY52 after six years of program development started in 1946. Included are separate reports on major programs and activities such as mental hygiene clinics, hospitals, neurology, social service, clinical psychology, and a separate report on research, training, and publications. The clinical psychology report includes annual trainee counts for 1946 – 1952. The summary for that information bulletin is on page 13 and, as is the case with all bulletins noted above, the May 1952 issue can be viewed or downloaded by clicking on the internet link provided with the summary for that issue.

Please additionally note that access time for loading and viewing of the bulletins may sometimes take a minute or more depending on volume of user activity at the CCHP site.
Attachment 1

A Table of Contents and Sampling of Content in the Neuropsychiatry Division

Information Bulletins Published by the Department of Medicine and Surgery of the

Veterans Administration: 1947-1953

(URLs provided for Viewing and Download)

1947 (1, 1) June
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32043]

In this first bulletin, the staff of the Clinical Psychology Section is listed on page 15. The number of authorized clinical psychology positions (546) and their planned distribution in the VA is given with 211 of those positions targeted for Mental Hygiene Clinics. The actual number of clinical psychologists hired as of March 25, 1947 is given as 193, including 34 part-time consultants, 149 full-time clinical psychologists, and 10 part-time clinical psychologists. Those on-duty psychologists are also listed by location assignment with the largest number (61) in Mental Hygiene Clinics. Also added is a brief description of the psychology training program and a list of universities participating in the VA psychology training program.

This bulletin also listed the extensive advisory committee structure established to help VA mental health planners (pages 5-6). The main committee included Donald G. Marquis from the Department of Psychology at the University of Michigan, a future APA president [see 1948 Bulletin (2,5) September below]. Marquis also chaired the clinical psychology advisory committee that included David Shakow. Marquis further served on the Committee of Neuropsychiatry of the National Research Council that evaluated VA internally approved research projects for funding recommendation (p. 22).

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1 The Neuropsychiatry Division was renamed the Psychiatry and Neurology Division in 1948 and again renamed the Psychiatry and Neurology Service in 1953.

2 An option to view each bulletin in Page Flip View on the CCHP site is available and recommended for ease of reading the bulletins. The downloading option for the bulletin, however, can only be accessed on the original URL page.
1947 (1,2) October
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32044]

The first “Vignettes of Progress” article describing branch office activity is featured in this bulletin and describes NP programs at the VA hospital in Roanoke, VA (Branch Office 4), the largest VA hospital in the branch at the time. It was also reported that the hospital had 13 full-time physicians and 28 assigned by the armed forces.

Specific caseload is reported for electric shock, insulin therapy, and prefrontal leukotomy. Psychology is credited for its assessment and therapy for general psychiatry patients and for valuable pre- and postoperative evaluation of prefrontal leukotomy cases.

A meeting of psychology branch leaders in July is mentioned that noted some 70 research projects were listed on the psychology monthly report. The bulletin also announces (pp. 10 and 12) that the first Civil Service Commission register of those eligible for clinical psychologist employment was released in July.

1947 (1,3) December
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32045]

This bulletin notes that James G. Miller, the first chief of the Clinical Psychology Section will be leaving January 1 and going to Chicago. It was announced that Harold Hildreth would be assuming the chief of Clinical Psychology Section role (p. 2).

A “Vignettes of Progress” article for Branch Office 9 highlights clinical psychology activities at North Little Rock along with GM&S operations and those of pathology and nursing service.

Mental Hygiene Clinic (MHC) group psychotherapy activities in St. Louis are described, including a group for aphasics.

An article on the greater New York City MHCs in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx announced that 197 specialists would be added to those clinics to expand services to veterans.
Psychiatry and psychology activities in Branch Office 3 are highlighted for changes over the past two years for Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Accomplishments for the branch clinical psychology section include 43 psychology trainees combining their work with graduate study at Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State College, and the University of Pittsburgh with the chief of the clinical psychology section conducting an advanced seminar at Princeton on techniques of personality study. Sixteen major research projects are now underway that include personality studies of stutters, memory loss in alcoholics, paranoid personality structures, relations of personality factors in “draw-a-man”, and psychodynamics of senile complaints.

Most of this bulletin describes activities of PM&R, psychiatry, and clinical psychology in Branch Office 12. The list of consultants to the office included Edward Tolman (former APA president) and Ernest Hilgard (current president-elect of APA). It was also noted that workshops for clinical psychology interns were conducted by David Rapaport, Max Hutt, and Carl Rogers.

Psychology interns at the VA hospital in Van Nuys, CA were receiving training as ward attendants that afforded unique opportunities for observation and interactions with patients and a first-hand acquaintance with ward operations.
1948 (2,3) August
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32048]

This bulletin contained only a two-page message by Donald G. Marquis, president of APA, that was intended to begin a bulletin on VA research planned for a second bulletin for September [see 1948 (2,5) September below]. The two-page message was prematurely distributed to the field in error. It was, however, dated and provided its own unique VA bulletin designation (IB-10-5-14).

The message from Donald G. Marquis, president of APA, noted the significance of incorporating clinical psychology as an integral part of the Psychiatry and Neurology Division of the VA. He also described the effort of universities agreeing to train a large number of clinical psychologists and the importance of the focus on combined clinical training and research of psychologists being hired in the VA.

1948 (2,4) September
http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32049

This bulletin featured a change in name of the Neuropsychiatry Division to the Psychiatry and Neurology Division. The change was not explained in this issue, but an indication for that change is introduced in an article in the 1953 (7,3) April bulletin titled “Psychiatry is not NP,” p.10.

The bulletin updated the numbers of psychology trainees in the VA and added future plans for training. Also included were the current stipend rates for three levels of psychology trainees (p.16).

Branch 1 activities in Maine, Connecticut, and Massachusetts were described in the bulletin, including mental hygiene clinic activities at Hartford and brief psychotherapy with sodium amytal at the Bedford VA hospital.
1948 (2, 5) September (2nd bulletin for September)
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32050]

This bulletin with a “Corrected Copy” label repeated the 1948 (2,3) August bulletin message from Donald G. Marquis, president of APA, but added an introduction to this research issue and a table of contents to the back page of his message.

Note: The table of contents specifies topics and page numbers for the rest of the bulletins but, unfortunately, these pages are not present in the collection stored at CCHP.

1948 (2,6) October 1948
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32051]

This one page issue only gave instructions for the replacement of the corrected pages for the 1948 (2, 5) September bulletin.

1949 (3,1) January
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32052]

Note: No table of contents was provided for this bulletin. The bulletin featured the New York State (Branch 2) activities in Northport, Canandaigua, and the Brooklyn Regional Office. Several photos of patient activities in Northport were included. Topics ranged from research, acute intensive treatment, and the medical service at Northport with psychodrama and continuous treatment service for chronic patients.
1949 (3,2) December  
http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32053

Treatment activities in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana (Branch 7) are featured in this bulletin with overviews of treatment program at the Illinois VA hospitals in Hines, Danville, and Downey; the VA hospital at Marion, IN; and the VA hospital at Tomah, WI.

A special rehabilitation laboratory at the Danville hospital describes a project with therapists from the Physical Medicine Rehabilitation Service and psychology trainees combining assessment resources in working with patients. The bulletin also lists the mental hygiene clinics in the branch and describes activities of the clinic at Chicago as an example.

1950 (4,1) February  
http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32054

The bulletin begins with a paper on psychiatric nursing with excerpts of a presentation made at a seminar at the VA hospital in North Little Rock, AR.

A variety of programs were described in the Reports From the Field section ranging from psychiatric food service at the VA hospital in Memphis to the companionship therapy program at the VA hospital in Canandaigua.
One highlight of this bulletin is the abstract by an area psychiatry consultant commenting on the status of VA psychiatry in the New York and New England area.

An article on 35 do’s and don’ts for hospital recreation staff working with psychiatric patients was highly recommended by the psychiatry and neurology division leadership as reading for all personnel interacting with psychiatric patients.

Gardotherapy (gardening as a therapeutic activity) at the VA hospital in Northport, Long Island, NY was featured in one of the Reports From the Field including the program’s accomplishments and awards and photos received by patients in the program. The treatment and care of disturbed and suicidal patients at the VA hospital in Marion, IN was covered in detail in another report.

An article on the role of a regional office attorney includes a summary of legal perspectives on determination of competency and commitment procedures.

In the Reports From the Field, one article by the assistant chief clinical psychologist at the Mental Hygiene Clinic, New York Regional Office presented data of patient improvement in psychotherapy by 55 therapists. Another article by Harry Grayson, chief clinical psychologist, described a group testing program of psychological assessment for new admissions with psychology trainees writing a report under supervision for inclusion in the clinical record within a week.
This bulletin announced that the Cooperative Research Project in Psychosomatics had been completed with four studies by VA clinical psychology trainees and doctoral students at the U. of Southern California. Their research procedures included the assessment of 30 patients with peptic ulcers and 25 patients with bronchial asthma. This was one of hundreds of doctoral dissertations generated by psychology trainees in the VA.

The article on the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association (APA) noted that Harold Hildreth, chief of the VA’s clinical psychology section was elected president of the APA Division of Consulting Psychologists. A quote from that article indicated “It is clearly evident that the VA clinical psychology is playing an important role in professional leadership in American psychology.”

The Reports From the Field in this bulletin describe a hospital orientation for psychology trainees at the VA hospital in Ft. Lyon, CO.

An eight-page study was included looking at the duration of hospitalization and readmission rates, including data tables. The results suggested typical data for 1951.
1951 (5,2) May
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32059]

This bulletin featured coverage of the first seminar for chiefs of Mental Hygiene Clinics which had been in existence since 1945. Also covered was drama therapy at the VA center in Wadsworth, KS and a summary of VA hospital recreation programs using rhythm bands for psychiatric patients to develop coordination, foster cooperation with staff and other patients, and provide a sense of accomplishment.

Reports From the Field described self-government on an acute intensive treatment service at the VA hospital in Fort Custer, MI with another report on lounge parties at the VA hospital in Cleveland for patients who had recently completed or were beginning insulin or electric shock therapy.

1951 (5,3) July
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32060]

A detailed report on a group therapy program for psychotic patients at the VA hospital, Cleveland described program objectives for four levels of functioning from those most withdrawn to those who are oriented but who have deficits in interpersonal relationships.

A seminar for psychiatrists at the VA hospital in Topeka, KS focused on expectations between the manager (now referred to as hospital director), the chief of professional services (chief of staff), and service chiefs. Presentations of the panel members at that seminar are included.
1951 (5,4) October
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32062]

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This bulletin features a paper by a Menninger Foundation psychiatrist at Topeka who analyzes the elements of psychotherapy process which are common to all schools of thought.

This bulletin also includes an overview of the planning and construction of the Haun-type psychiatric hospital prepared by Paul Haun. Also included is a description of a psychiatric treatment program for patients with TB and an article detailing the role of a chaplain with psychiatric patients.

1951 (5,5) November
[http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32063]

A routine medical screening program of long-term psychiatric patients was found to identify significant numbers of medical conditions not previously found in annual exams and which had elicited no complaints from the psychiatric patient.

A social worker at the VA hospital in Bedford, MA presented a case from a pilot program designed to evaluate foster home placement of a psychiatric patient in the community (a home other than his own). It was noted that the concept had been introduced in Europe and was well-established in many state hospitals but sparsely used in the VA until recent efforts to promote such placement to successfully return patients to the community after discharge.

The article described several aspects of foster care placement programs from finding foster homes to selecting patients.
1952 (6,1) February
http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32064

The foreword to this bulletin describes the status of VA mental hygiene clinics and the first article on the future of hospital psychiatry attempts to assess the problems and needs of the present and planning for the future. A second article identifies concepts responsible for the successful operation of the mental hygiene clinic at the Baltimore regional office.

In Reports From the Field, the VA hospital in American Lake, WA planned and evaluated a 9-hr course in employee-patient relationships to develop more positive attitudes toward patients and mental illness and to acquaint employees with some fundamentals in promoting patient recovery.

1952 (6,2) May
http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/32065

This special issue of the bulletin profiles psychiatry, neurology, and clinical psychology accomplishments for 1952 and provides comprehensive data on workload and staffing. Page 5 lists all staff in the Division office with Hildreth as head of clinical psychology section.

The clinical psychology report includes total numbers of psychologists by program and gives trainees on duty for each year starting in 1946. Time spent in research and numbers of patients evaluated/treated are presented. The chapter on research, training, and publications also includes papers, dissertations, journal articles, journal name and other summary data on psychologists and trainees.
This bulletin contains the description of an in-service training program for nurses, nursing aids, psychiatric aides, PM&R therapists, and representatives of special services at the VA hospital in St. Cloud, MN that was coordinated by clinical psychologists. The goal was to clarify the part each played in treatment programs, discuss the dynamics of human behavior, and teach the understanding and reporting of the behavior manifestations of patients. Examples of these topics are given. Also noted in this bulletin was a meeting of the Advisory Committee for the Neuropsychiatry Division whose members were listed including Donald Marquis and Karl Menninger.

Presentations at the 4th annual Neuropsychiatric meeting were featured in this bulletin including an article by the president of the American Psychiatric Association on the attitude of the physician. Comments on integrated medicine were made by Harvey Tompkins, chief of the Psychiatry and Neurology Division in VA Central Office in which he reported witnessing the integration of psychiatry with the rest of medicine over the past six years.

The bulletin also reminded regional offices and hospitals that they were invited to submit material to the bulletin for the Notes From the Field Section, especially information about new or improved clinical methods or administrative procedures and observations which might be of interest to other stations.
Roger Cumming, the chief of the Social Service Division in VA Central Office writes the foreword to this bulletin by commenting on the role of social work in psychiatry and introduced several articles presented by social workers at conferences over the past year. The articles ranged from social work goals in mental hygiene clinics to psychiatric hospitals. Irving Rabinow, the assistant chief social worker at the mental hygiene clinic in the VA Regional Office in New York commented on the role of the social worker on outpatient treatment programs and the principles and practice of home trial visits of patients. The integration of the psychiatric nurse supervisor in group therapy was reported at the VA hospital in Hines, IL by Mitzie Murray, psychiatric nurse supervisor, and Roy Brener, Chief of Psychology.

The foreword to this bulletin describes a document entitled “Planning in Psychiatry and Neurology, A Forecast 1953-1960,” a recently published synopsis of a seven-year projection of needs in the VA (no other information about this document is provided.) An article by a dietitian at the VA hospital in Gulfport, MS discusses the issue of feeding the aged and infirmed, another article by a social worker at the VA hospital Tuskegee, AL describes a project involving finding foster homes for patients with psychiatric problems, and still another describes psychodrama at a mental hygiene clinic at the Brooklyn, NY regional office.
The chief of the Psychiatry and Neurology Division introduces the importance of research in mental illness in the foreword. An article by clinical psychology staff at the VA hospital in Bedford, MA is included which had been prepared for their professional staff at Bedford on the methodology of the research process.

Earlier writing on the attitude of the physician in treatment (September 1952 bulletin), Leo Bartemeier, president of the American Psychiatric Association, writes a parallel article on the attitude of the patient in therapy.

In this bulletin, the chief of psychology at the VA hospital in Danville, IL discusses clinical psychology interdisciplinary conflict in an article presented at an American Psychiatric Association meeting.

An article on the VA hospital construction program describes a plan and progress in building and renovating NP hospitals in the VA over the last seven years. Included are the recommended NP hospital size of 1,000 beds. All would have 240 general medical & surgical beds and a mixture of acute intensive psychiatric care beds and other psychiatric bed care levels. For those designated TB-NP Centers, 154 TB beds were considered optimal. For VA General Medical and Surgical hospitals with 1,000 beds, 250 NP beds would be included.
The chief of the Psychiatry and Neurology Division, Harvey Tompkins, discusses the role of a teaching hospital in the foreword to this bulletin but stresses that any alert professional person is potentially, and should be in fact, a teacher, adding that there are no “non-teaching” psychiatric facilities in the VA.

The introduction to the bulletin notes that the entire issue is devoted to regional office activities, particularly with the 3rd annual mental hygiene clinic meeting. David Shakow, Head of Psychology at the University of Illinois discusses some problems in the field with research in mental hygiene. A consolidated summary of seven sessions of round table discussion are also included in this bulletin. Session topics ranged from procedures and methods for referral and intake to team structure and inter-relationships of each discipline in therapy, training, research, and supervision.

Note: This bulletin title reflects the change in designation of the Psychiatry and Neurology Division to the Psychiatry and Neurology Service.

The bulletin foreword addresses the importance of integration of professional groups into a larger group for best functioning in treating the patient.

The VA’s member-employee (work rehabilitation) program at the VA hospital at Perry Point, MD is described by Peter Peffer, MD. Patients discharged from the hospital were employed and paid for 75 designated jobs in the hospital for “member-employees” and lived with regular employees in the hospital’s aides quarters.
Vice Admiral J. T. Boone, the VA Chief Medical Director wrote about leadership in the foreword to this bulletin. He defined leadership as “the capacity to draw out and make full use of the best contribution of each and every member of the team.” He further indicated it meant cultivating team spirit and the encouragement, utilization, and reward of the positive contributions of all.

The bulletin also contained a report of FY 1953 Psychiatry and Neurology Service activities. It was noted there were more vacancies in psychiatry and neurology positions than any other specialty, but that increases in clinical psychologists were made possible in the VA as a result of the clinical psychology training program. That training program was described as a highly satisfactory and profitable program in the VA.

In another article, the VA’s marriage partner group therapy program at the Salt Lake Regional Office mental hygiene clinic was discussed with both patients and spouses reporting benefits. Staff also reported a greater appreciation of the marriage situation over that given by the veteran patient alone.