

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

SPECIAL REPORT

OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH RELATIVE TO THE ADVISABILITY OF MAKING PSYCHIATRIC SERVICE AVAILABLE TO THE DISTRICT COURTS

[UNDER CHAPTER 47 OF THE RESOLVES OF 1950]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH,
15 ASHBURTON PLACE, BOSTON, November 16, 1950.

To the General Court of Massachusetts.

I have the honor to submit to the Legislature the report required by the provisions of chapter 47 of the Resolves of the year 1950, entitled, "Resolve providing for a Study by the Department of Mental Health of the Advisability of making Psychiatric Service Available to the District Courts."

Respectfully,

PETER B. HAGOPIAN, M.D.,
Assistant Commissioner.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH RELATIVE TO A STUDY OF THE ADVISABILITY OF MAKING PSYCHIATRIC SERVICE AVAILABLE TO THE DISTRICT COURTS.

In accordance with the provisions of chapter 47 of the Resolves of 1950, the Department of Mental Health has studied the advisability of making psychiatric service available to the district courts, and submits the following report.

Chapter 47 of the Resolves of 1950 reads as follows:

Resolved, That the department of mental health is hereby authorized and directed to make a study and investigation relative to the advisability of providing psychiatric services and facilities for the district courts of the commonwealth. It shall report to the general court the result of its investigation, and its recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry its recommendations into effect, by filing the same with the clerk of the house of representatives on or before the first Wednesday in December in the current year.

Approved July 11, 1950.

On May 4, 1950, the Department of Mental Health set aside, out of its federal Grant-in-Aid for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1950, the sum of \$4,000 for the employment of consultant personnel to make this study and to cover incidental expenses incurred during the course of the investigation. At the same time, arrangements were made with the Joint Committee of the Boston Bar Association and the Suffolk Medical Society to assist in the study. Competent legal and psychiatric consultants have been employed. This study is being conducted with the combined help of both psychiatrists and lawyers. The

committee referred to above consists of an equal number of members from each profession, and the active work is being done by a well-trained team, a lawyer and a psychiatrist.

This team has already made substantial progress. Personal consultations have been held with all of the justices of the courts which have been provided with part-time psychiatric service as well as the psychiatrists performing that service. Many of the procedures in this State have been examined. Descriptions of what other States do about the problem under investigation have been secured and analyzed. All of this work is being extended to cover a broader selection of the courts, a more complete and deeper study of procedures in Massachusetts, and a more thorough analysis of laws and practices in other States.

Although much has been accomplished, it is the considered opinion of all those actively connected with the study that much more information should be secured before definite recommendations are made to the Legislature.

It is therefore respectfully requested that the study be continued and definite recommendations be filed no later than the first Wednesday of May, 1951. Of the federal funds originally set aside, there remains a portion sufficient to finance the study for the extended time requested.

Respectfully submitted,

PETER B. HAGOPIAN, M.D.,

Assistant Commissioner of Mental Health.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty-One.

RESOLVE AUTHORIZING THE CONTINUANCE OF THE STUDY
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH OF THE AD-
VISABILITY OF MAKING PSYCHIATRIC SERVICE AVAILABLE
TO THE DISTRICT COURTS.

1 *Resolved*, That the department of mental health,
2 authorized and directed under chapter forty-seven
3 of the resolves of nineteen hundred and fifty to make
4 a study and investigation relative to the advisability
5 of providing psychiatric services and facilities for
6 the district courts of this commonwealth, shall con-
7 tinue its study and investigation until the first Wednes-
8 day in May of the current year, at or before which
9 time said department shall report to the general
10 court, by filing a report with the clerk of the house of
11 representatives, the result of its study and investi-
12 gation and its recommendations, if any, together
13 with drafts of legislation necessary to carry its recom-
14 mendations into effect.

