



HEALTH POLICY DISCUSSION SERIES

Forty Years of Neglect: The Federal Role in Caring for the Severely Mentally Ill

Friday, October 31, 2003, 9:30 a.m.–noon
Wohlstetter Conference Center, Twelfth Floor, AEI

On October 31, 1963, President John F. Kennedy signed into law the Community Mental Health Centers Act, through which psychiatric patients would be treated in small community clinics rather than in large expensive state hospitals. Though the act promised to improve conditions and save millions of dollars, it mostly added to the growing wave of deinstitutionalization that began a few years earlier. Some of the released patients were able to manage well on anti-psychotic medications with attendant social services, but many others landed on the streets and in jails. Today, at least a third of the homeless and up to one quarter of those incarcerated are people with severe mental disorders such as schizophrenia and manic-depressive illness.

In July 2003, the New Freedom Commission for Mental Health appointed by President George Bush released its report, Transforming Mental Healthcare in America. It championed the need for more and better housing options, employment, and “consumer” control but virtually neglected the most desperately ill that are unable to take advantage of social services and govern themselves.

Panelists at this event will consider the proper role of the federal government in caring for the severely mentally ill. Federal policies with respect to treatment, disability issues, involuntary care, and federally-funded research will be addressed, and recommendations will be presented for future revision and implementation.

9:00 a.m. Registration

9:30 Introduction: SALLY SATEL, AEI

9:45 Panelists: WAYNE FENTON, George Washington University
JEFFREY GELLER, University of Massachusetts at Amherst
ROBERT KEISLING, Unity Healthcare
E. FULLER TORREY, Stanley Research Foundation
MARY ZDANOWICZ, Treatment Advocacy Center

Discussant: STUART BUTLER, Heritage Foundation

Moderator: SALLY SATEL, AEI

11:15 Keynote Speaker: Senator MIKE DEWINE (R-Ohio)—invited

Noon Adjournment

I will attend the health policy event on Friday, October 31.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Please check if this is a new address.

You may register online at www.aei.org/events, or fax this form to 202.862.7171, or mail this form to: Conferences, American Enterprise Institute, 1150 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

For additional information, please contact Nell Manning at 202.828.6024 or nmanning@aei.org.

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