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# Thomas E. Bryant to Senator James O. Eastland, 15 April 1977

Thomas E. Bryant

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 15, 1977

Honorable James O. Eastland  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Eastland:

The President's Commission on Mental Health was established by Executive Order on February 17. After a long and careful process in which over 1200 individuals from across the country were considered, the twenty members of the Commission have been appointed by the President. They have already begun work to help define national purposes and goals with regard to mental health needs and to suggest priorities and plans for meeting those needs.

The Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Mental Health made its final report in 1960. Since that time, there has not been a comprehensive assessment of what our mental health needs are nor of how effective we have been in meeting those needs. I hope you agree that it is time for such an assessment and that this newly-established Commission can assist in that as well as in helping chart a course for the next few years in meeting the mental health needs of the American people.

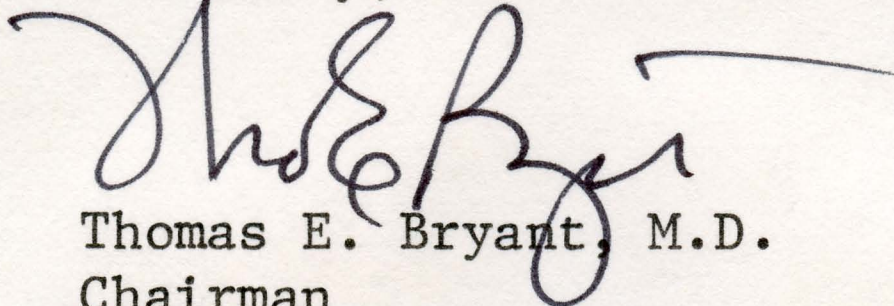
In order to realize the full potential of the Commission, it is necessary that we seek advice and assistance from a broad, representative range of interested citizens and agencies, both public and private, to learn their views on the issues, problems, and priorities for mental health in our country. In addition, to assist the Commission in its work, special task panels are being set up to review in depth the mental health needs of children, the aging, women, minorities, and the poor to determine to what extent they are being underserved, and to suggest ways in which we can address the needs of these groups more effectively. Other panels will examine the problems of traditional mental illness, of alcoholism and drug abuse, while still others will concern themselves with the various ways in which existing institutions and agencies can improve the quality of mental health delivery across the nation. We will also be exploring such directly related questions as the financing of these services and the state of research in mental health.

Because I know you share our concern that the recommendations of the Commission be as broad-based, fair, and well-informed as possible, I hope you will write and give us the benefit of your own experience, knowledge, and perspectives in these areas, not only as they apply within your own state but to the nation as a whole.

Since this Commission is advisory in nature, for its advice to be realistic and responsible it is of critical importance that such advice reflect the concerns of the Congress. I hope you will take the time to help us.

I am enclosing copies of the original Executive Order establishing the Commission and of the press release announcing the names of the Commissioners. I look forward to hearing from you soon and to working with you during the coming year on these matters of deep mutual concern.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Bryant, M.D.

Chairman

President's Commission on Mental Health

February 17, 1977

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSEEXECUTIVE ORDER  
- - - - -PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the United States of America, and as President of the United States of America, in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. I), it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. (a) There is hereby established the President's Commission on Mental Health, hereinafter referred to as the Commission, which shall be composed of not more than twenty persons who shall be appointed by the President.

(b) The President shall designate a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson from among the members.

Sec. 2. (a) The Commission shall conduct such public hearings, inquiries, and studies as may be necessary to identify the mental health needs of the Nation. In particular, the Commission shall seek to identify:

(1) How the mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, and mentally retarded are being served, to what extent they are being underserved, and who is effected by such underservice.

(2) The projected needs for dealing with emotional stress during the next twenty-five years.

(3) The various ways the President, the Congress, and the Federal Government may most efficiently support the treatment of the underserved mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, and mentally retarded.

(4) Various methods for coordinating a unified approach to all mental health and people-helping services.

(5) The types of research the Federal Government should support to further the prevention and treatment of mental illness and mental retardation.

(6) What role the various educational systems, volunteer agencies and other people-helping institutions can perform to minimize emotional disturbance in our country.

(7) As nearly as possible, what programs will cost, when the money should be spent, and how the financing should be divided among Federal, State and local governments, and the private sector.

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(b) The Commission shall submit a report to the President recommending how the mental health needs of the Nation can be met and identifying the relative priority of those needs.

Sec. 3. The Commission shall make a preliminary report with recommendations to the President by September 1, 1977. A final report with recommendations and priorities shall be submitted to the President by April 1, 1978.

Sec. 4. (a) The Chairperson of the Commission is authorized to establish such advisory committees as may be deemed appropriate to carry out the purposes of this Order.

(b) The Commission, and any advisory committees established pursuant to this Order, shall hold such hearings and public meetings as the Chairperson may deem necessary and as required by law.

Sec. 5. The Commission is authorized to request, at the direction of the Chairperson, from any executive department or agency, any information deemed necessary to carry out its functions under this Order. Each department or agency shall, to the extent permitted by law, furnish information and otherwise cooperate with the Commission in performing its functions under this Order.

Sec. 6. The General Services Administration shall provide administrative services and facilities to the Commission on a reimbursable basis.

Sec. 7. (a) Each member of the Commission and its advisory committees and staff who is not otherwise employed in the Government, may receive, to the extent permitted by law, compensation for each day he or she is engaged upon the work of the Commission at a rate not to exceed the maximum daily rate now or hereafter prescribed by law for GS-18 of the General Schedule, and may also receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law (5 U.S.C. 5702 and 5703) for persons in the government service employed intermittently.

(b) The Commission is authorized to appoint and fix the compensation of such other persons as may be necessary to enable it to carry out its functions, and is authorized to obtain services in accordance with the provisions of Section 3109 of Title 5 of the United States Code, to the extent funds are available therefor.

(c) All necessary expenses incurred in connection with the work of the Commission shall be paid from the appropriation for "Unanticipated Needs," in the Executive Office Appropriations Act, 1977, or from such other funds as may be available.

(d) Within the limitations permitted by law the Commission has the authority to seek and receive other than government funds to carry out its work.

Sec. 8. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other Executive order, the functions of the President under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. I), except that of reporting annually to the Congress, which are

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applicable to the Commission or its advisory committees, shall be performed by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in accordance with guidelines and procedures established by the Office of Management and Budget.

Sec. 9. The Commission shall terminate sixty days after the transmittal of its final report to the President.

JIMMY CARTER

THE WHITE HOUSE,

February 17, 1977.

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EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE  
UNTIL 2:00 P. M. (EST)

March 29, 1977

Office of the First Lady's Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Contact: Dr. Thomas Bryant 456-7100  
Mary Hoyt 456-2164

First Lady Rosalynn Carter, Honorary Chairperson of the new President's Commission on Mental Health, met with its new members in the White House today. The Commission, created on February 17th by Executive Order 11973, will begin work on April 1st. A preliminary report to the President is due September 1st.

Thomas E. Bryant, M.D., J.D., who will serve as Chairman of the Commission, also attended the meeting with Mrs. Carter.

Over 1000 candidates for the Commission were screened by a small ad hoc committee chaired by John Gardner, Chairman of Common Cause, and composed of the following members: Eleanor Holmes Norton, Human Rights Commissioner for New York City; Margaret Mahoney, Vice President of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, New Jersey; Brian O'Connell, Executive Director of the Mental Health Association; Joseph T. English, M.D., Chief Psychiatrist of St. Vincents Hospital, New York City; and Daniel X. Freedman, M.D., Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry of the University of Chicago.

The screening committee submitted a small pool of names for final selection to President and Mrs. Carter.

Although Mrs. Carter is serving as Honorary Chairperson of the Commission, she will be actively involved in all aspects of the Commission's work.

The twenty-member Commission includes eight women, twelve men, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, and a former patient who serves on the National Patients Rights Committee of the Mental Health Association.

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## THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Priscilla Allen, 47, is a former patient from San Francisco who has been effectively involved in the passage of legislation to benefit the mentally ill in California. She serves on the National Patients Rights Committee of the Mental Health Association; she served on a panel at the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law on "The Role of the Consumer in Mental Health Services Advocacy" in 1976, and is the author of an important article published in The Psychiatric Quarterly called "A Consumer's View of California's Mental Health Care System".

Allan Beigel, M.D., 37, a practicing psychiatrist, is Director of the Southern Arizona Mental Health Center in Tucson, Arizona. The author of numerous articles on mental illness and its treatment, he consults both the American Psychiatric Association and the Mental Health Association. He is the past president of the National Council of Community Mental Health Centers and has taught at Harvard, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, National Institute of Mental Health and the University of Arizona College of Medicine.

Thomas E. Bryant, M.D., J.D., 41, has been President of the Drug Abuse Council since 1971. Successively since 1965, he was in private medical practice in Atlanta, a medical consultant to the Job Corps and Director of Health Affairs for the Office of Economic Opportunity. He has also served on the President's Committee on Mental Retardation, the Committee on Health Care for the Poor of the American Medical Association, the Health Task Force of HEW and was Chairman of the Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Food and Medical Service. Bryant received both his medical and law degrees from Emory University in Atlanta.

Jose Cabranes, 37, is the Legal Adviser and Director of Government Relations at Yale. He has served for ten years on the Board of Hudson Guild, a New York City Settlement House active in community mental health programs, and on the Board of Directors of the Yale-New Haven Hospital. He has been especially concerned with the problems of state and federal regulation of hospital costs.

John Conger, 55, author of ten books on child development, is Professor of the Division of Clinical Psychology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. He has also served as Dean of the University of Colorado School of Medicine and is acknowledged as an expert in adolescent health problems and as an effective policy-maker in the mental health field.

Thomas Conlan, 65, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and of the Ohio chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism, is a trial lawyer in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is also a member of the Ohio Board of Regents and General Counsel and Director of the Southern Bank, Cincinnati. He is one of Ohio's leading citizen-volunteers and experts on the subject of alcoholism. He has also served on numerous committees concerned with health education and health services.

Virginia Dayton, 43, an active citizen-volunteer, is the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Bach Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which specializes in therapy, training and research based on the family systems theory. She is a member of the State Mental Health Advisory Council and of the Board of Directors of the United Way. Her chief interest has been in intermediate care systems and those services which help mental patients make the transition back to family and community.

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LaDonna Harris, 46, long-time crusader for human rights, is Founder and President of Americans for Indian Opportunity, a national non-profit Indian organization now based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. An active member of the Comanche Tribe, she was voted as one of the eight outstanding women in the U.S. by the Ladies Home Journal in 1969. She has served on the boards of Common Cause, Urban Coalition, Urban League, Save the Children Federation, National Academy of Science, Mental Health Association and the National Health Council.

Beverly Long, in her early 50s, a leading volunteer in mental health policy-making in Georgia, is the Chairperson of the Governor's Advisory Council on Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse in Georgia. She is a former President of the Mental Health Association of Georgia and is active in the national Mental Health Association. She holds Masters Degrees in Public Health and Chemistry-Zoology from the Universities of North Carolina and Georgia, respectively.

Ruth B. Love, in her early 40s, an articulate spokesperson, lecturer and writer on the subject of education, is the Superintendent of Schools in Oakland, California. She has particular concern for disadvantaged and minority youth and was former Director of the Right to Read Effort in the U.S. Office of Education and former Chief of the Bureau of Compensatory Education Program Development of the California Department of Education. She was also a former Project Director for Crossroads Africa in Ghana.

Florence Mahoney, in her 70s, a nationally known advocate for the needs of the aging and the emotional problems involved, was instrumental in proposing and creating the National Institute on Aging of NIH. As a prominent citizen of Washington, D. C., she has devoted the past 35 years to championing the cause of high quality bio-medical research, child development research and for improved delivery of health services. She has been co-chairman of the National Committee Against Mental Illness since 1950.

Martha Mitchell, 38, is Associate Director of Nursing of the Connecticut Mental Health Center and Assistant Professor of Psychiatric Nursing of the Yale University School of Nursing. She is especially skillful with policy problems involving the role of nursing in mental health care delivery.

Mildred Mitchell-Bateman, M.D., 55, is a Commissioner of the West Virginia Department of Mental Health and Clinical Professor, Department of Behavioral Medicine, West Virginia University School of Medicine. A clinical psychiatrist, she has given special attention to the health delivery problems of the underserved and has worked to develop new systems of reaching and serving people, beginning with mental health programs in the schools.

Harold Richman, 40, an expert in social welfare policy, is Dean of the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. A former White House Fellow, Dr. Richman is concerned with improving public policy in mental health. He is a member of the Committee on Child and Family Policy of the National Academy of Science.

Julius B. Richmond, M.D., 61, a pediatrician and educator, is the Director of the Judge Baker Guidance Center in Boston. He co-designed the concept of the Neighborhood Health Center for the Office of Economic Opportunity in the mid-1960s, and founded the Head Start program. He is also Professor of Child Psychiatry and Human Development at the Harvard Medical School; Professor and Chairman, Department of Preventive and Social Medicine at the Harvard Medical School; and Psychiatrist-in-Chief of the Children's Hospital Medical Center, Boston.

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Reymundo Rodriguez, 32, a health educator and urban planner, is Executive Assistant for the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, University of Texas, Austin. He was formerly Regional Planner and Coordinator of Criminal Justice for the Middle Rio Grande Development Council in a nine-county area in Texas. He has also worked as a traveling elementary school teacher with migrant workers, and is a consultant to the Texas Commission on Alcoholism.

George Tarjan, M.D., 65, is the Director of the Mental Retardation and Child Psychiatry Division of the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, and Professor of Psychiatry, UCLA School of Medicine. As the head of the country's major research and teaching center on mental retardation and childhood disabilities, he has extraordinary knowledge of delivery systems and an understanding of state bureaucracies and agencies.

Franklin E. Vilas, Jr., S.T.M., 42, is an Episcopal minister who is known for his pastoral counseling programs in the Northeast. He is now Rector of the Diocesan Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, New York. He was formerly the Pastoral Officer and Director of Special Programs in Health and Mental Services at Trinity Parish, New York City, and was the founder of the Family Life Institute in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts.

Glenn Watts, 56, a labor leader, is President of the Communications Workers of America, a member of the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO and is Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the United Way of America, the latter being the largest private funder of community mental health services.

Charles V. Willie, 49, is Professor of Education and Urban Studies at the Graduate School of Education at Harvard. A former research sociologist with the New York State Mental Health Commission, he has written on community mental health problems and is active in the development of black colleges as institutions in our society. He is a member of the Technical Advisory Board of the Maurice Falk Medical Fund and a consultant to the Center for Minority Mental Health Programs of the National Institute of Mental Health.

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