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PSYCHIATRY

Open Doors Both Ways

► THE "OPEN DOOR" policy for mental hospitals, which has become widespread in recent years, needs improvement, Dr. Robert H. Felix, director of the National Institute of Mental Health and president of the American Psychiatric Association, told the Twelfth Mental Hospital Institute in Salt Lake City.

"For the open door to become effective, it must be a swinging door," he said.

The open door policy, he explained, is a policy of making it possible for patients to move more freely from the hospital into the world beyond. But, he added:

"I do not believe the doors can stay open unless they become doors that open both ways, unless they are doors that let the community into the hospital as well as letting the patients go out into the community."

In recent years, many mental hospitals have held exhibits of patient art.

"But so far as I know, no hospital in this country has brought the paintings of established artists to the patients in the hospital itself," Dr. Felix said.

"What is more natural than that the patient should want to be surrounded by works of art or at least have the opportunity to see well-planned exhibits of creditable work?"

"Patients, like other people, want to exercise their intellectual abilities. How many mental hospitals in this country have developed cooperative programs with departments of education, colleges and universities to bring stimulating adult education programs into the hospital?"

Dr. Felix said that mental illness, except for some organic conditions, "does not rob a person of his intellect or reduce his mental activities to the level of a child. Un-

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Polio Shot Effective In Four-Way Vaccine

► SALK POLIO VACCINE has been found to be more effective when given with diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough vaccines in combined injection than when given alone.

This is reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association, Oct. 29, 1960, along with these findings from research:

Frozen foods handled according to good commercial practice are safe and nutritious but thorough cooking of precooked food is advised.

Serotonin, a compound found in the blood, can cause migraine headaches, and anti-serotonin therapy can reduce the frequency and severity of attacks when taken as a preventive agent by some persons.

Of the two anticoagulants, heparin and Dicumarol, heparin permitted more adequate anticoagulant therapy in an overcrowded and understaffed hospital.

• Science News Letter, 78:308 November 12, 1960

fortunately, the regime in too many mental hospitals does just that."

The paths leading into the mental hospital should be made smoother for the mental patient, Dr. Felix said. The public should know that the hospital exists and what services it offers to the patient who needs help with emotional problems. And the roads out of the hospital when the patient is ready to reassume his place in the family, in industry and in the community should be opened up and made easier to travel.

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