Fred Chaney’s Substitute Agenda

Psychiatric Care Institute Friday at Whitfield

Fred Chaney wrote the following letter to Dr. Jaquith about the state-wide institute to be held at Whitfield on August 24, 1956. While he used some dry wit in his suggested agenda, he also was making a statement about the “big wigs” meeting at the hospital to discuss psychiatric care which he obviously felt was lacking at Whitfield. Note that Chaney often referred to Dr. Jaquith as “Dr. Jake.”

The letter incorporates excerpts of the *Clarion-Ledger* article “Psychiatric Care Institute Friday.” The letter to Dr. Jaquith is included in its entirety and has not been edited.

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*COPY Aug. 23, ’56*

*Dear Jake –*

*I note with great satisfaction yesterday’s newspaper’s announcement of the state wide gathering of Miss. big wig hospital representatives to be held here tomorrow and the announced subjects to be discussed by the home-town talent to further public knowledge and information concerning our beloved community and it’s features.*

*The published agenda of discussion sounds both interesting and informative and many of us who will not be there hope for it’s success while at the same time wondering if even more impressive and spectacular results might not result if the substitute schedule of addresses suggested below could be staged instead (since we believe that this substitute program would prove equally revealing, informative and interesting if not more so than the announced one.*

*Announced address by Dr. W.L. Jaquith entitled “Admittance Policies of State Mental Institutions to be changed to “How I hood-winked the Legislature into building an expensive and expensively maintained Maximum Security Building in the interest of public safety when the truth is that the crime record made by Whitfield patients outside will continue to come - - as it always has - - from mistakes made by too superficial psychiatric examination at the front and from premature discharges there”*

*Announced address by Dr. J. J. Head, “General Hospital Care for the Psychiatric Patient” to be changed to “How to Win Friends and Influence People whether psychotic or not – This will also help make you a crime expert at $350.00 more a month”[[1]](#endnote-1)*

*Announced second address by Dr. W.L. Jaquith entitled, “Care of the Drug Addict and Alcoholic” now to be changed to, “I’ve Found out that you can’t beat this racket so I’ve decided to join it”*

*Address entitled “Problems of Geriatric Care-Mental and Physical” to be delivered by Dr. C.L. Busby now to one instead called “A Busby ‘High-Ball’[[2]](#endnote-2) is about the most definite answer I think for everything-mental or physical”*

*“Understanding the Mental Patient” by Dr. Bruce Sutton to be changed instead to one called, “How to Advise upon the condition of mental patients without having to understand anything”*

*Speech first called, “Nursing Care for the Mentally Ill” now to become one called, “How to make integration work in Miss. Begin First at the Bughouse” by Miss Albertine Sinclair*

*“A Picture of the Family Situation” to be developed by Mrs. Louise West now changed, “How to Keep The Family Pleased and Fooled”*

*This is not a minority Report concerning suggested changes for a more effective way to inform and interest the gathering hospital visitors but a majority idea as to what should be said to them. However this is the great time and day not for majorities but minorities and these suggestions are not being sent to headquarters therefore with much hope for their adoption.*

*Still we think it should be done.*

*Yours,*

*F.C.[[3]](#endnote-3)*

1. Psychiatrist who worked on the Maximum- Security Building earned more money at that time than regular staff psychiatrist. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. A “Whitfield High-Ball”, a mixture of milk of magnesia and Cascara. The combination was given to patients as a stimulant laxative. The muscle contractions help move stool through the bowels rather quickly. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Fred Chaney, Letter to Dr. Jake, August 23, 1956, Fred Chaney Medical Record, MSH.

   [↑](#endnote-ref-3)