

The West Virginia

Sanitarian

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newsletter

Professional Development Plan Not Scrapped - De Barr

Contrary to fears of Registered Sanitarians throughout West Virginia, the Sanitarians' Professional Plan and related pay scale adjustment has not been scrapped, according to Acting Chief Edwin C. DeBarr, Environmental and Food Control Section.

In a discussion with Robert Parkins, President, West Virginia Association of Sanitarians November 17, Mr. DeBarr said the plan has been sent to the state Civil Service Commission for concurrence. No action there, however, has been announced to date.

In a letter this month to Dr. George Pickett, the Association Board of Directors urged that the plan be instituted to get Sanitarians off "a dead end street" at both the county and state levels.

Possible scrapping of the plan became an issue after it was learned that it could have been held up at request in favor of an across-the-board pay scale adjustment for all state employees.

In the policy decision issued by the Sanitarians' Board of Directors, Dr. Pickett was advised that the plan is important not so much as a pay increase, but rather as a plan of career development which has been lacking sorely in the past for Registered Sanitarians.

The plan, as developed and presented by Sanitary Engineering Division, calls for the following:

- Title adjustments ranging from Sanitarian Assistant to Sanitarian VI, with promotion to the Sanitarian IV at the county health department level;

- Promotion by experience and educational achievement, including Masters degree and Continuing Education Unit (CEU) levels; and

- Related pay increases according to Civil Service Commission approval.

Turnover rate of Registered Sanitarians hired throughout the state in the past 20 years has averaged 60 per cent. As proposed, the professional development plan is an attempt to slow the attrition rate.

The plan received enthusiastic approval of Association members meeting in Wheeling for the 1978 State Health Conference.

Food Service Plan Adopted by Board

In the unanimous opinion of the Sanitarian Association's Board of Directors, a food service manager certification program should be begun by the State Department of Health.

That policy decision was decided at the Fall quarterly meeting of the body and forwarded to Edwin C. DeBarr, Acting Chief, General and Environmental and Food Control Section.

The proposal was introduced by Association President Robert Parkins in order to move things off "dead center" with food program training.

Several counties, such as Kanawha and Cabell, have discontinued foodhandler

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Registration Effort Begun

Initial thrust for lobbying for an updated West Virginia Sanitarian's Registration Act was begun in Charleston on November 16.

Dr. Page Seekford, Director, Kanawha-Charleston Health Department, called the meeting for Sanitarians throughout the state. A majority of Sanitarians and county and state health departments responded with 53 Sanitarians and representatives attending.

Training on how to lobby a bill was provided by State Senate President William Brotherton (D-Kanawha). He said he will co-sponsor this session the improved bill to maintain a proficient Registration Act. A second co-sponsor should be suggested by the West Virginia Association of Sanitarians, he said.

Registration Acts throughout the country have come under scrutiny recently due to administrative costs. Speaking to this matter, Association President Robert Parkins said he favors combining functional costs. "There is no need to create a costly bureaucracy to carry out the legitimate functions of these boards when one administrative secretary can do it all," he said.

"However," he added, "What we are dealing with is an improved registration bill which will set minimum standards for carrying out environmental and food control standards in the state. I don't want to see some 'dude' coming freshly out of the Army who has been an inspector there thinking he is qualified FDA certified inspector or sanitarian in restaurants in West Virginia."

Following Sen. Brotherton's remarks, Charles Sabre, RS, Administrator, (Kan-Charleston H.D.) said the Sanitarian's Association is the vehicle we must work through for lobbying for the bill. "This bill was introduced in 1977, but we weren't sure where we stood because we thought (Dr. George Pickett) opposed all Registration Acts," he said.

Speaking to the group following these comments, Parkins said "Secondly, we need to lobby in support of Dr. Pickett's proposal for increased monies for local health services."

"Many small, rural counties do not even have enough money for a basic staff of a Sanitarian, Nurse, and Clerk," he said. "Our problem is that there is no basic funding system for local health departments in West Virginia." Using his own county health department as an example (Roane) he said 29 persons are employed either full or part-time. "Yet, our basic budget is not adequate for even one full time Sanitarian, Nurse, and Clerk. All others are either CETA or part-time employees.

The Executive Committee of the Sanitarians' Association has appointed a Legislative Committee to assist with grassroots organization for lobbying for the new Registration Act and for Dr. Pickett's local health services increase in funding, Parkins said. The committee, as well as the Executive Committee, will meet at 1 PM in Bridgeport on Dec. 1.

Members of the Legislative and Executive Committees will be contacting each Sanitarian in the state for lobbying for both the Registration and local health services bills, according to Parkins. "Our grassroots efforts are the key to the solution," he said.

Mid Year Meeting Being Planned

As mandated by the membership at the annual meeting in Wheeling, the Association board of directors has begun working on plans for a mid-year meeting.

A three day meeting for in-service training is on the agenda for the Association sometime in the early Spring prior to beginning of the "sewage construction period."

Food and Environmental Health Section Acting Chief Edwin C. DeBarr has contacted CASA (Central Atlantic States Assn.) officials regarding CEU-credited environmental health training.

Of the planned three day training section, two full days would be devoted to environmental health and a third devoted to professional development activities.

Electric Companies Asked To Require Sewage Approval

In a policy decision of the Association Board of Directors, electric power companies in the state have been requested to require prior health department approval of a sewage system before connecting electricity to any living unit.

The policy request asks that the State Department of Health request the Public Service Commission to regulate the request.

Purpose of the policy decision is to eliminate pressure of enforcement on local Sanitarians, according to the letter to Robert G. McCall, Director, Environmental Health Services.

According to Association President Robert Parkins, the requirement would free program enforcement time from many septic tank permits and allow more time for neglected programs, such as food service inspections.

Presently, power companies, all of whom receive regulatory authority through the Public Service Commission, require that before a connection is made, that four out of seven items be met by the property owner in order for an electrical service connection to be made. They are:

- (1) Own the property;
- (2) Add an addition onto a mobile unit;
- (3) Substantially landscape;
- (4) Build a driveway;
- (5) Construct an "approved" water system;
- (6) Remove the wheels from a mobile unit;
- (7) Install a health department approved Sewage Disposal system.

Of the seven items, according to Parkins, requests for prior septic tank, soil absorption systems are "few and far between," Approval, he said, would only apply to living units outside public sewerage areas.

One state which has enforced this method of compliance, South Carolina, saw a 50 per cent increase in the number of septic tank permits issued in one year.

According to a spokesman at the 1978 Interstate Environmental Health Seminar held this year at Cannan Valley State

Park, that state's number of permits rose from 20,000 to 30,000 after their Environmental Health Section reached a similar decision with the electrical power companies.

In the letter from the Board of Directors to Dr. Pickett, Parkins said that, for example, in Roane County two Sanitarians are responsible for construction development over 441 square miles, and you cannot even see one square mile in a given location." The Board of Directors' request would solve the massive enforcement problem in West Virginia, he said.

DeBarr Commended

Food and Environmental Health Section Acting Chief Edwin C. DeBarr, has been commended in a letter from the Association Board of Directors for complimentary service in the program's latest Program Review.

The first review completed since the "famous five" letter to Dr. Pickett regarding local health department deficiencies, the report was positive and constructive, according to Assn. Directors.

Completed on the basis of a "local official" complaint against Michael Mills, Calhoun County Health Department, the Review was termed "constructive" by Board Members.

Mills had not completed training, was not registered, and had not received supervision for several weeks prior to the complaint, although several enforcement actions had been instituted at the time and by him.

The review, completed by William Pinnell, RS, State Department of Health, pointed out both deficiencies and recommendations in the report.

In a policy letter to Mr. DeBarr from Board members, the Acting Chief was commended for a "positive" report.

New Editor

Mary Georgia Chase, RS, Monongalia County Health Department, has been selected 1979 Editor of the Sanitarians' NEWSLETTER.

Ms. Chase will be responsible for overall production of the house organ begun by the Association Board of Directors this year.

Two interm issues were authorized by the Board of Directors, with direction to be steered toward a professional, positive and quarterly basis. This is the second issue.

Ms. Chase will attend all Board meetings and report on activities and policy decisions.

Format of the publication was endorsed by Association members at the State Health Conference in Wheeling and is to be reflected in future issues.

The new editor works with James Woodford, RS, of Morgantown and President-Elect of the Association.

Legislative Committee

Responsibility for lobbying efforts for bills affecting Sanitarians and Food and Environmental Health in the state have been assigned by the Association Board of Directors.

Committee members of the Association from throughout the state were selected by Board members in a recent meeting held in Sutton at the Braxton County Health Department. They are:

John Betram, Acting Chairman, Brooke Co.; James Sheets, Wood-Parkersburg; Norman Moore, Brooke Co.; Jackie Taylor, McDowell Co.; Charles Sabre, Kanawha-Charleston; Skip Burton, Cabell-Huntington; Michael Eltzroth, Greenbrier Co.

In a letter to committee members pinpointing responsibilities, the Board of Directors asked that the following matters be given specific attention:

Proposed Professional Development Plan; Sanitarians Registration Bill; Requiring electrical power companies to require sewage permits prior to service connections; and Endorsement promotion of Dr. Pickett's proposal for increased local health department funding, specifically for environmental health services.

Food Service (Con't.)

programs as such. Other, smaller programs, such as Roane and Hardy, have simply not announced scheduled programs, while other large and small counties have continued the program as required by the WV Code, many of whom simply "show a movie and ask for discussion questions," according to Earl Curry, RS, following a recent meeting of the West Virginia Public Health Association.

According to Parkins, "We are dealing here with an antiquated activity, but it is still required by the Code. Most Sanitarians should not even be teaching food-handler schools because they are not teachers, per se."

He said a specialized, FDA certified officer should travel the state offering this training to foodservice managers.

The policy decision has been referred to Dr. George Pickett, Col. Robert McCall and Mr. DeBarr for further action.

Parkins said he expected comments to be forthcoming on the policy decision at four upcoming public hearings on a proposed new food Code for the state.

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