

CHANGE IN ELOISE BOARD PROPOSED

The Wayne County General Hospital and Infirmary, better known as "Eloise", is the largest institution in the State of Michigan. On an average day it cares for 6,600 bed patients and 80 out-patients. In effect there are three separate hospitals on the same grounds—an acute general hospital with an average of 450 patients where medical and surgical cases are treated and which is similar to Detroit Receiving Hospital; a hospital for the mentally ill where approximately 3,600 patients are housed which is similar to Northville, Pontiac, and Ypsilanti State Hospitals; and a county infirmary for the aged, chronically ill, or indigent with about 2,550 patients.

Administrative Survey

In 1952 hospital officials requested an increased appropriation of \$587,000 for 156 additional employees. As a result of the request, both officials at the institution and members of the county board of supervisors requested that an administrative survey be made of the entire institution. A special committee of the county board of supervisors asked the Citizens Research Council to undertake the survey. The survey was drafted by the Council with the assistance of professional hospital consultants and was presented to the committee by the Research Council in March, 1954.

Who Runs Eloise?

Three county boards share responsibility for operating the institution—the board of supervisors (97 members; only one of whom is directly elected to that post by the people), the board of county auditors (elected for staggered four-year terms), and the board of institutions (three of whom are appointed by the supervisors and two appointed by the auditors).

As with other agencies of county government, the board of supervisors appropriates the funds to operate Eloise and is responsible for the institution's general policy direction. The board of auditors recommends to the supervisors the budget for the institution, administers the budget, and audits expenditures.

However, primary responsibility for the operations of Eloise is charged by state law to the five-member board of county institutions. Under the law, this board has both administrative and policy-making responsibilities.

The Board of County Institutions

Some 116 recommendations were made in the survey report concerning the operation of the institution. These recommendations covered such subjects as staffing of the

wards; use of buildings; nursing organization; classification of mentally ill patients; and such subsidiary functions as the dairy, farm, and slaughterhouse. However, the key recommendations concerned the board of county institutions itself, since it is this board which by law has charge of the institution. The report pointed out that:

1. The board had not established policies for many activities of the institution.
2. The board had established independent and confused lines of authority to its executive secretary, general superintendent, business manager, and medical staff.
3. The board had improperly and directly participated in the administration of the hospital.
4. The law establishing the board of county institutions does not make it responsible to either the supervisors or the auditors.

Proposed Board

Various proposals have been made, though not acted upon, to change the governing board of the institution.

The Research Council in its original report proposed a nine member board will all members appointed by the board of county auditors, subject to confirmation by the board of supervisors. Board members would receive \$10 per meeting (rather than \$4,362 a year for the chairman and \$3,000 a year for the other four members as at present).

The board of county auditors has proposed a seven member board to be comprised of three appointed citizens, the chairman of the board of supervisors, the chairman of the board of county auditors, the county health director, and the health commissioner of the City of Detroit. The board of county auditors did not specify which board (either the auditors or supervisors) should appoint the three citizens, beyond indicating that they should be appointed by one board rather than two as at present.

The adoption of either one or a combination of these proposals would create a board free of the record and habits of the existing one. This board would be better equipped to fulfill its proper role of policy determination and review of operations and it would be responsible directly to one supervisory agency in the county government.

A committee of the board of supervisors is currently reviewing the entire report and has before it the various proposals. The decision on what type of board is to govern Eloise thus rests initially with the board of supervisors and its committees, and finally with the Michigan state legislature.