

# MASSACHUSETTS MENTAL RETARDATION PLANNING PROJECT

29 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02116

December 1, 1966

His Excellency John A. Volpe  
Governor of the Commonwealth  
State House  
Boston, Massachusetts

*Dear Governor Volpe:*

We have the honor to submit herewith the report of the Massachusetts Mental Retardation Planning Project.

The late President John F. Kennedy provided the impetus for retardation planning. In his first year in office, President Kennedy called for ". . . a comprehensive and coordinated attack on the problem of mental retardation." As a result of his leadership and the recommendation of his Panel on Mental Retardation, the 88th Congress enacted the "Maternal and Child Health and Mental Retardation Planning Amendments of 1963" (P.L. 88-156), which provided grants to develop statewide plans for the retarded.

In March 1964, former Governor Endicott Peabody designated the Department of Mental Health as the state agency to administer the planning grant and carry out the purposes of P.L. 88-156, and established the Planning Board of the Massachusetts Mental Retardation Planning Project and appointed to it the commissioners of all relevant state agencies to assure an interdepartmental approach. You appointed, in addition to the commissioners, eleven leading citizens to serve on the Planning Board — the policy making body of the Planning Project.

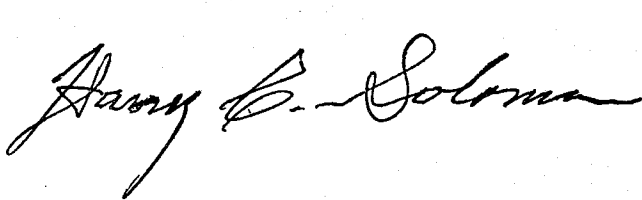
The Planning Board has devoted the past two years to studying and evaluating the proposals and policy positions of the nine task forces of the project. Hundreds of concerned citizens from all parts of the Commonwealth contributed much time and energy to explore all aspects of the complex problem. Physicians, social scientists, educators, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, and numerous experts in the field of retardation responded enthusiastically to the challenge of formulating a comprehensive plan for the retarded.

Retardation is one of the Commonwealth's major problems. Approximately 165,000 Massachusetts citizens are retarded. To these individuals and their families, retardation represents financial hardship, emotional strain, problems of adjustment, schooling and vocation, and untold human anguish. To the Commonwealth, retardation represents the tremendous economic and social cost of wasting human resources.

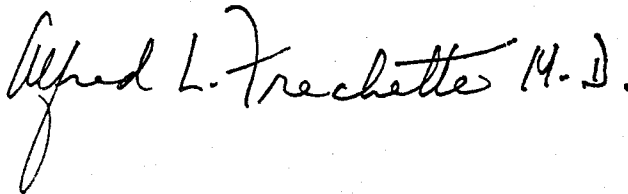
This report does not presume to present definitive solutions to all the complex problems associated with retardation. It does offer a forceful and far reaching plan which can begin to bestow the full benefits of our society on the retarded.

Just as our late President John F. Kennedy inspired the nation to search for solutions to the problem of retardation, we in Massachusetts must lead the nation in translating goals and proposals into comprehensive programs which will actually benefit our handicapped citizens.

Respectfully submitted,



HARRY C. SOLOMON, M.D.  
Commissioner, Department of Mental Health



ALFRED L. FRECHETTE, M.D.  
Chairman, Planning Board

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In acknowledging the participation and cooperation of all those who made the Massachusetts Mental Retardation Planning Project possible, I do so as Project Director, not as author of this report.

Hundreds of people participated with great vigor, enthusiasm and knowledge. Some of their names are included in the list of task force members. Others have helped as individuals and must go unidentified because to name some will only do a disservice to the many others whose names were not systematically recorded. As with everyone, except the staff, all gave without financial remuneration. They participated because of their interest in improving conditions and activities for retarded people.

Many of the services necessary for a comprehensive approach to retardation programs were, and still are, underdeveloped in Massachusetts. The expertise brought to the task by all participants, coupled with energy and dedication, has translated a difficult task into a promising and workable plan for the retarded.

Responsibility for policy decisions and recommendations which follow was that of the Planning Board, chaired ably by Alfred L. Frechette, M.D., Commissioner of Public Health for the Commonwealth. This Board exercised its responsibility in a serious and deliberative manner. Board members gave to the task many hours of their valuable and limited time. Working with them has been a most pleasant experience for me.

Three of the senior officials of the Department of Mental Health deserve special attention: Dr. Harry C. Solomon, Commissioner; Dr. Robert W. Hyde, Assistant Commissioner for Mental Retardation, and Dr. Lewis B. Klebanoff, Assistant to the Director of Mental Hygiene for Mental Retardation. Their energetic, concerned and effective guidance contributed immeasurably to the many and complex issues. To Dr. Solomon, a special plaudit is necessary, for he made it possible for The Medical Foundation to do this job.

The interdepartmental direction of the Project was facilitated by the participation of officials assigned to work with us by their respective commissioners. These appointees shared the daily problems with the staff. Their understanding, support and help in overcoming the countless small obstacles is sincerely appreciated. Their names are included on the page listing staff members.

Our Project was conducted during two different state administrations. Complete cooperation was received throughout from both.

The staff were tireless in their efforts. They believed in the cause and their work showed it. Edward Newman, who was responsible for day by day administration, did a superb job as did all of his colleagues. If authorship is to be distributed, the words are theirs although the ideas are shared by the many described above.

It is hoped that the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Congress, who made possible this Planning Project, will be satisfied with the results. The specific proposal for state retardation planning grants was made possible by the late President John F. Kennedy. The decision to make such funds available was a wise one. We hope our efforts were equal to the assignment.

In closing may I especially thank the Board of The Medical Foundation. The Board has encouraged and supported our efforts to contribute to the community while allowing the Board of the Planning Project to retain complete policy control over the planning efforts.

HAROLD W. DEMONE, JR.

## STAFF

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\*Appointed Project Coordinator November 1, 1966.

The staff of the Project has been supplemented by liaison officials appointed by the Commissioners of Mental Health, Education, Public Health, Public Welfare and Rehabilitation.

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