

2504 York Avenue
Vancouver 9, B.C.
July 2, 1974

Mr. Paul Kyba

Dear Paul,

I trust you recall meeting me last summer when you visited the Mental Patients Association prior to MPA's signing of the contract with LEAP. I was the verbose author of the 100 page application which, in part, led to LEAP's supporting the organization for the past year.

Though I no longer work for MPA--since I left three months ago I have been working in the field of journalism--I still maintain close personal ties with many of the staff and members. Several of them have told me recently of some anxiety regarding the renewal of the contract for the second year. Apparently the local Manpower office is making some 11th hour demands which potentially jeopardize the life of the organization.

Though the LEAP project officers responsible for MPA have been replaced four or five times, the ones I dealt with assured me consistently that LEAP was a program designed to support organizations for a maximum of three to three and a half years, provided of course that certain criteria were met. Among others, these criteria included 1) job creation for otherwise "unemployable" persons; 2) responsible and viable project management; 3) a community benefit component; and 4) progress toward permanent funding by other sources. No one would dispute that criteria 2 and 3 have been met to an extraordinarily acceptable degree. As for number 4, negotiations with the B.C. government are taking place which, I am confident, will result in eventual funding of the entire scope of MPA's programs. To secure this funding may take one to one and a half years--which is to say that LEAP support through the critical upcoming period is vital to the organization's survival.

I realize that job-creation is a paramount consideration in terms of the LEAP program. The mechanics of documenting the job-creation benefits of MPA's program present certain technical problems; however, these benefits are being documented and the group is making every effort to satisfy the demands of the local office. Having spent three years working with MPA, I know how many people are being aided in returning to the work force and to financial self-sufficiency. Further, as a psychologist familiar with the literature on mental patient problems, I know how chronically unemployed

and discriminated-against expatients are. It really is no exaggeration to say that MPA is probably the most successful mediating agency in facilitating the terribly difficult transition from hospital to employment. So far as I understand LEAP's objectives in job-creation, MPA does fulfill them where most other agencies in the mental health field fail to do so.

Failure to renew the contract for a second year would have a devastating effect upon the lives of hundreds of people, since LEAP support is essential during the upcoming phase of negotiations with the provincial government. If I understand the situation correctly, the demands of the local office, while basically reasonable, have been raised at a very late date and thus impose great strain and uncertainty upon those who already shoulder more than their share of both.

Because MPA is successfully getting people back to work, the requests for documentation will be met. In the meantime, I would appreciate any help you can offer in relieving the insecurity under which the present staff is labburing. Specifically, if you could help to lessen the pressures by offering some reassurance that the contract will be renewed for the next fiscal year, it would make many hard-working people rest easier. (It would also decrease the number of anxiety-ridden phone calls I receive.)

As the founder of MPA I'm naturally concerned about its well-being. Personal considerations aside, however, I truly believe in the essential work MPA is doing--everything from saving lives to creating jobs.s

The withdrawal of LEAP support at this very late date would leave virtually no options open to the group and would almost inevitably invite its disintegration. I hope you'll do whatever you can to prevent this disastrous outcome. The phasing out of LEAP support must be coordinated with the initiation of provincial funding. As I see it, this really boils down to only a matter of timing. The group needs LEAP's cooperation to bring about the transition without disrupting the lives of those who depend on MPA for their well-being and in many cases survival.

This, of course, is a personal letter prompted by a situation to which I am presently an "outsider." I hope you'll understand the spirit of the letter and that it will in some measure encourage you to throw your support behind MPA's renewal application.

Finally, I hope you are well.

Sincerely,

Lanny Beckman