

## RESEARCH COMMITTEE WORKING PROPOSAL

Research is important to MPA for two basic reasons:

- 1) So that the organization can grow and provide more and better services and,
- 2) So that the lives of people in hospital or just generally freaking out in society can improve through action to change social treatment of "mental patients".

Research cannot do this by itself. People have to organize programs and change things. Research can provide the knowledge and informational basis on which to get funding and to suggest new programs either through governmental or social agencies. Both growth and novelty are necessary for MPA.

In order to be effective the research program needs goals and structure. These have never been clearly thought out or stated, either to ourselves or to the membership. The purpose of this statement is to define those goals. We have agreed that if the goals are not met by May 31st then the research positions will be abolished and shifted into other areas.

There are three basic areas to be covered in research.

1) Statistics Gathering- This is the "invisible" work that has to be done in order to provide information for grant writing, housing, new projects which MPA members suggest, educational activities, effective changes for people outside of MPA etc. The main topics to be covered are

a) Mental Health Statistics: numbers of people in hospital, voluntary and involuntary commitments, patient-staff ratio, readmission rates, hospital funding, medical vs. mental health budget, mental health spending vs. other government spending, patient movement figures, methods of treatment and other facts related to the lives of patients and things which bear directly on their lives.

b) Patient Information: where people go for care, private vs. public health care, suicide rates, lack of facilities which are badly needed--crisis facilities, the economic background of people in hospital as opposed to those who get more specialized care, where and how drug programs are being used and on whom etc.

c) Housing: CMHC research on housing, costs of housing, mortgage rates, the availability or lack of half-way houses, proposals for patient-controlled facilities etc.

d) Finish the goddam Revised Mental Health Act.

e) Research into Mental Health Industry: psychiatrists' salaries, drug company profits, inter-corporate drug ownership, govt. drug schemes etc.

-These are minimal concrete research goals which should be met without too much difficulty.

2) Internal Education- Using writers (Laing, Szasz etc.) plus research findings to pass information on to the membership and to increase awareness of what is happening in the field of mental health nationally, internationally and locally. Would like to set up educational workshops or groups to do this.

3) External Education and Working for Change- There are a lot of people out there who are connected to MPA through similar lives and experiences--hospital for one-- whose situation is almost hopeless because of the mental health system. MPA can work for meaningful change through the research and public educational aimed at changing the situation of people in hospital for the better and getting rid of myths about "mental patients" and "mental illness". Research can document how myths are based on falsehood rather than truth.

One thing we almost forgot--we intend to set up a library with Earl as librarian in charge of loaning out the books we have purchased so far.

-Respectfully submitted by Dick Betts and  
Jeff Marvin.