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Mental Healthcare in New York

Mental health issues have affected the lives of New York residents throughout history. Mental disorders continue to spread in New York, causing serious challenges as it affects adults and children's ability to work, family and school life. Sadly, the most vulnerable communities such as the homeless are affected. Not only do they have to carry the symptoms of mental disorder but acknowledge the exceeding costs. Throughout history mental health has greatly impacted individuals of all ages, but requires new policies to provide for the most vulnerable needs.

Mental disorders have widespread and become common in the State of New York. Severe mental illness is greatly impacting the most vulnerable community. Initiatives have been proposed throughout the years by Mayors, with its purpose to remove mentally ill individuals from streets and subways of New York. Sadly, the article titled, "35 Years of Efforts to Address Mental Illness on New York Streets" argues that New York has failed to place the homeless into proper specialized shelters (Newman, 2022). An audit was conducted by Thomas DiNapoli, which disclosed that a quarter of homeless shelter residents with serious mental health issues were not placed in a mental health shelter (Newman, 2022). It was mentioned, "the mental health system turned away decades ago from long term institutionalization in psychiatric hospitals, but has never come up with an adequate replacement" (Newman, 2022). Programs which are in place, designed to fill the breach are either limited or flawed (Newman, 2022). Efforts have

been made throughout decades in the State of New York, but require new changes to improve lives.

Historically in the United States in 1947 to 1987 the Willbrook State School was known as the largest facility in the world for the “mentally retarded” (Nicols, 2022). The State managed its facility by housing 6,000 young children in 1960, when its capacity was 4,000 (Nicols, 2022). The archived material on mental health care describes Robert Kennedy’s tour findings of 1965, which he referred to as a snake pit where children lived in conditions worse than animals in a zoo (Nicols, 2022). Mentally handicapped children were exposed in unsafe and cruel conditions. By 1972, disturbing images of inside the facility were exposed (Nicols, 2022). Leading to closing the institution and the passage of the 1980 Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, which empowered the attorney general to investigate state run institutions that hold large numbers of people, such as jails, nursing homes and mental health facilities (Nicols, 2022). New York throughout its history concerning mental health has developed treatments and new outreach programs.

Throughout history New York has improved by developing programs and facilities that seek to meet the needs of the mentally ill. Changes have been made regarding the safety and treatments needed for patients, but in the present day many are not receiving proper treatment. The most vulnerable communities should be eligible to be treated concerning their needs.

Reference:

Newman, A. (2022, December 2). *35 years of efforts to address mental illness on New York Streets*. The New York Times. Retrieved April 1, 2023, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/nyregion/mental-illness-homeless-streets.html>

Nicols, C. (2022, May 20). *Deinstitutionalization of Mental Healthcare in New York*. NYC Department of Records & Information Services. Retrieved April 1, 2023, from <https://www.archives.nyc/blog/2022/5/20/oq2ongk62te2ht5zrnlikfg0g6gv98>