

Dear Ms. Angela Salerno
Advocacy Coordinator, AMHB

October 23, 2006

Thank you for expressing the encouragement and that you were looking forward to seeing the results of the API committee chaired by Ms. Valerie Naquin.

The API committee was formed to look into two issues: the 5 unit manuals and the grievance procedure.

We agree with the idea of getting along with state officials and hospital managers but not to the point of sacrificing patient rights and those rights given by statute. The only way to get improvements at hospitals like Alaska Psychiatric Institute is for organizations like AMHB to apply pressures.

We would like to comment on some of the issues brought up by Mr. Ronald Adler at the last AMIIB meeting.

Mr. Adler stated that API's grievance procedure is legal and the Attorney General's Office agrees. We would like to remind everyone that the last time API and the Attorney General's Office went to the Supreme Court, they lost. So they are not the best judge of what is legal. The Supreme Court even mentioned that hospitals oftentimes operate on convenience, so API and the Attorney General's Office are not even the best judge of what is fair.

API management has stated that legally an informal complaint and a formal grievance are the same. We disagree. Federal regulations state that a grievance shall be answered in writing. There were 256 complaints/ grievances filed at API last year. API claims that 90% were resolved. Not one made it to appeals, not one of the resolutions was given a written response.

Mr. Adler stated that the API hospital is attempting to install person-centered treatment plans. We went to the hospital, borrowed and read the book that is serving as a model for revisions. We are not opposed to making changes.

If indeed API is creating a new way of handling patient rights, then everybody needs to be involved; the API committee, AMHB, and the general public and other patient rights organizations, before new policies are initiated.

In closing, the API committee needs to finish the work on the grievance procedure and its recommendations for revisions of the 5 unit manuals. We are encouraging AMHB to stay involved and encourage the process to completion.

Thank you,
Cc: AMHB

API Committee

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