

COMMITTEE REPORT

The Committee on Health and Hospitals and the Committee on Human Services held a joint meeting on Thursday, October 2, 1980 in the cafeteria of the Cambridge Hospital. The purpose of this meeting was to continue discussions on hiring additional interpreters at the hospital.

Councillor Vellucci requested a status report from Isabella Hinds of the Department of Human Service Programs on the issue.

Ms. Hinds stated that she and members of the department had met on several occasions with hospital personnel and modifications of the overall record keeping system to determine the need for interpreter services will be in place shortly. She further stated this would begin from the admitting office and emergency room. Furthermore a new Spanish and Haitian interpreter would be on board as of October 6, 1980.

Mr. MacLeod, at this time, stated he had been in contact with the employment agency for Harvard and Radcliffe College and that they could make available through a work study program undergraduate and graduate students who are bilingual. He further stated this would be a positive step in increasing additional interpreters.

Ms. Zarita Sousa stated it was her hope that both long and short range solutions could ultimately provide twenty-four hour coverage for both the hospital and neighborhood health clinics.

At this time Councillor Vellucci recommended that the hospital notify all the clergy in the city to determine if they could provide emergency interpreting services.

Ms. Cynthia Oldham of the School Department stated that there are bilingual high school students who could possibly work on a part-time basis. Furthermore she stated her concern over what she believed to be a lack of recruitment from the hospital personnel coordinator and the city in general on this issue.

Both Mr. Healy, Deputy City Manager and Mr. MacLeod outlined the hiring practices, Affirmative Action, Civil Service and Union requirements for hiring permanent employees.

Dr. Norberg of the House Officers Association stated that there were areas of medicine that would be difficult for a high school student to handle.

At this time Councillor Vellucci appointed a task force of several individuals including Mr. Fernandez, Ms. Oldham, and Mr. Borges of the high school Bilingual Department, a representative of C.O.P.A., C.H.A.M.A., Concilio Hispano, and the Massachusetts Health Care Coalition along with Ms. Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services Programs to meet and discuss this issue and to report back to the committee.

Vice Mayor Russell urged the task force to seriously consider all factors in securing additional resources for the interpreter service of the hospital. Furthermore, he stated, that the medical schools should begin to seriously consider expanding their curriculum to include a required "second language" course, thereby insuring more bilingual medical staff.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:45 p. m.

For the Committee,


Councillor Alfred E. Vellucci,
Chairman.

Committee report from the joint committees
on Health and Hospital & Human Services for
a hearing held on October 2, 1980.

In City Council,

October 6, 1980

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