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Crash Program On Alcoholism Called Urgent

A southeast Michigan member of Michigan's new Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Alcoholism said today she will press for action on your "top priority" problems.

Mrs. Phyllis Tuttle, executive director of the National Council on Alcoholism - Greater Detroit Area, and one of seven members of the commission

appointed last week by Gov. William Milliken, identified as priorities:

- Clarify the extent of advertising, alcohol, pills and illegal drugs.
- Initiate and develop a state-wide program of action.
- Provide adequate treatment for alcoholics and their families.
- Evaluate drug abuse and alcoholism rehabilitation programs to find which work best, and why.

Crash programs on all four phases are urgently needed, she said.

MRS. TUTTLE is planning a conference on hospital care of the alcoholic, to be held Feb. 28 and 29 in the Sheraton Motor Inn, Woodhaven.

Purpose of the conference is to assist general hospitals in

their programs for the admission and care of acute alcoholics. The conference is one of a series being held throughout the country.

Persons interested in attending should contact Mrs. Tuttle or John Parker at National Council on Alcoholism, Greater Detroit Area, 6131 W. Outer Drive, Detroit, 48225. Among the speakers at the conference will be Terrence Carroll, director, Comprehensive Health Planning Council, Detroit; John McConnell, chief, Alcoholism Control Section, Michigan Department of Public Health, Lansing; and Dr. Fred Seaman, medical director, National Council on Alcoholism, New York City.

Reports Mrs. Tuttle, "At our office we get calls every day from sick alcoholics needing treatment but we have few places to refer them. Within the city of Detroit only one general hospital offers a treatment program for alcoholism, although there are probably 75,000 alcoholics residing in the city."

"In all of Southeast Michigan there are only seven general hospitals which provide identifiable services for alcoholics. A total of 35 beds is being used for persons with diagnosis of acute alcoholism - with a potential sick list of 200,000 alcoholic patients."

OTHERS FROM Southeast Michigan named to the commission are Probate Judge George B. Bashara Jr., and Dr. Jack T. Tamm of Livonia, director of the comprehensive health education curriculum project and lecturer at Eastern Michigan University.

Mrs. Tuttle, who since 1968 has directed the NCA's United Foundation - supported agency for aiding alcoholics to recover, said:

"There's \$300 million scheduled for release from federal funds on alcoholism prevention and treatment programs in the next three years. Before any Michigan community or agency can qualify there must be an acceptable state-wide plan, so that's a top priority, too."

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) and the Comprehensive Health Planning Council of Southeastern Michigan (CHPC-SEM) are likely to be called upon to help in the future campaign, she said.

A plan for Southeast Michigan as one part of the state-wide program must be fashioned, she said.

Other roles for the two agencies, she said, might include the drug abuse program evaluation and the effort to clarify the extent of alcohol and drug abuse in the region.

WITH MORE THAN 200 programs with varied goals and purposes, programs for helping persons addicted to other drugs now functioning in Southeast Michigan, there's a need to bolster successful ones and screen out others, she said.

"Either SEMCOG or CHPC could be empowered to evaluate the programs that have evolved in recent months," she said. "The role is recognized and an agency not directly engaged in a program of its own would be the best means of making such an evaluation."

These agencies also could be commissioned to clarify the severity of the addiction problems, she said.

"We don't know for sure how many alcoholics or other addicts there are in Southeast Michigan or in the state or any part of it."

"An estimate just received from the Michigan Department of Health is that there are over 400,000 alcoholics in Michigan."

Assuming that is correct and one-half of them, 200,000, are in Southeast Michigan, then one of every 12 persons over 25 in the seven SEM counties suffers from alcoholism.

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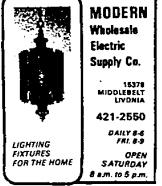
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