

Hearing to examine possible changes in MHMR agency

United Press International
A hearing this week may begin to expose a power struggle among the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Legislature, and the mental health commissioner and his new commissioner.
At issue is who will call the shots for the mammoth department which cares for 2.5 million Texans suffering from mental illness or retardation.
Although by law the commissioner runs day-to-day operations, there are allegations the commission has too active a role — which in turn upsets the Legislature.
The Texas House hearing on Wednesday will focus on how the complex department, with a

\$1 billion biennial budget, should be reorganized to better serve the state's mentally feeble and disturbed. Some fear that the latest round of angry politics could harm the department and damage patient care.
The power struggle may also emerge from behind the scenes as the hearing convenes amid reports of secret meetings and illegal influence exerted by the strong-minded commission which oversees the department.
There also are reports that Dr. Gary E. Miller, 46, may be ousted from the \$71,000 commissioner's post — a job he has held since February despite previous firings in Texas and Georgia — if he refuses to accept the board's concept of how to run

the department.
Others say that board chairman L. Gray Beck of San Angelo — who calls the House investigation a witch hunt — may be asked to step down by members of his own board. The board has the power to hire and fire commissioners and make policy, but not to run daily department operations.
Beck believes operations and programs involved in the MHMR organization should be separate while Miller wants to combine them under deputy commissioners of mental health, mental retardation and management-support.
Miller has 18 years experience in the mental health field — a career that includes what he

calls "political" dismissals from executive positions in Texas (1970) and Georgia (1974).
He was ousted as head of the mental health divisions in both states, which detractors attributed to his hunger for power and inability to get along with colleagues. His firing in Texas prompted a bitter power struggle between the board and then-commissioner Dr. John Kinross-Wright — who eventually was forced out.
Miller returns to Texas after a five-year stint as head of New Hampshire's program, the second longest tenure in the nation, and dismisses reports he was urged to leave that state.
Rep. Walter Grubbs, an Abilene Democrat recently defeated for re-election, first said he was appalled that the Texas board rehired "someone as controversial and with this kind of job history" over 25 other applicants.
But Grubbs, who will preside at Wednesday's hearing, now has quarrels only with the commission. His committee and one in the Senate oversee the

MHMR agency and board operations — which lawmakers have distrusted for years.
"I consider this board to be the big problem and you can quote me," Grubbs said. "The commissioner is the mental health authority for the state of Texas and under House Bill 3, has to run the department."
"The board is a policymaking board only. The chairman of the board, Mr. Beck, will not accept that. They will have trouble keeping a commissioner indefinitely unless they turn it over to the commissioner."
Although much of the controversy could surface this week, it is almost certain to be aired publicly June 25 when the MHMR board is scheduled to consider Miller's theory on how to follow legislative mandate to reorganize, "if feasible," by Aug. 31.
The task involves 14 state schools for the retarded, nine state hospitals, four human development centers, 66 outreach programs and 30 community centers with a total of 26,000 state employees.

Braniff bankruptcy causes court hassle

United Press International
FORT WORTH — A federal bankruptcy court is so overwhelmed by the task of supervising 80,000 creditors of Braniff International that it will open a separate Braniff annex.
The court will more than double its current staff of seven women and its office space to handle a parade of attorneys, Braniff ticket-holders and former employees of the defunct airline.
Bernetta Leiden, bankruptcy clerk for the northern district of Texas and coordinator of the

office expansion, said the dimensions of the case are staggering.
"Most of the time we have one creditor, or three," she said. "Occasionally, we get 3,000 or 5,000. But, my God, we've never had 80,000."
Braniff filed a Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition last month, swamping the office.
To help handle the overwhelming workload from the Braniff case, the court plans to open the separate Braniff annex this summer. Nine temporary

employees, whose jobs may last for several years, will be hired.
Merely notifying all of the parties of the first meeting of Braniff's creditors is a major undertaking in itself.
The job has required a special issue of pre-stamped envelopes and the court will have to hold the first meeting of creditors outside the courthouse because the building has no room large enough.
After creditors are notified, some will form a committee to evaluate the company's position.

Police link rapes of three Dallas women, all over 80

United Press International
DALLAS — Police said there are similarities between the recent rapes of two women over the age of 80 and the April slaying of an 83-year-old woman.
"There are similarities," an investigator said. "They were all elderly women and all. But we don't know for sure until we make some arrests."
However, he said no arrests are anticipated today in the latest incidents.
An 80-year-old woman, 80, was in fair condition at a local hospital after she was raped. She was assaulted early Sunday by a man who crawled into her bed, hit and raped her repeatedly, stabbed her in the stomach and told her to "lay down and die."
After the man left with the 2-caliber revolver she kept under her pillow and stole her telephone, she crawled to the door of her home and called for help.
Exactly two months earlier, another elderly woman in the same block was beaten, sexually abused and left to die. Emma McKee, 83, died about an hour after a man dragged her from her house to her backyard as she tried for help.
Another woman, 81, also was raped, beaten and robbed early Sunday in the same part of the

city just a few hours after the first assault. The woman told police she was awakened by an

intruder who slapped her, and raped her before escaping with her jewelry.

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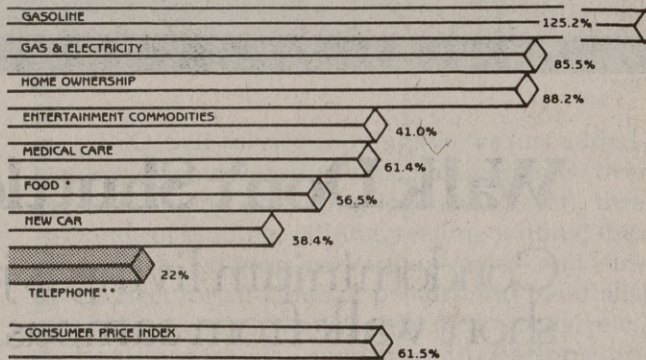
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