

Friday, February 17, 1989

Official: MHMR short \$80 million '90-'91 mental health budget fails to meet court-ordered criteria

AUSTIN (AP) — State lawmakers recommended 1990-91 budget for the Texas mental health system is \$80 million short of addressing court-ordered changes and improvements, an appointed monitor of the case said Thursday.

The Legislative Budget Board's funding recommendation for the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation would force the agency to violate a federal lawsuit settlement, the monitor said.

"The LBB recommendation will not fund compliance," case monitor David Pharis of Austin said in a report to U.S. District Judge Barefoot Sanders of Dallas.

"It may be unfortunate that the mental health budget requires expansion to adequately meet the needs of patients," Pharis said. "But that is a hard fact — it does."

MHMR asked for a 1990 total operating budget of \$1.43 billion, a 37 percent increase over its 1989 budget of \$832.5 million, to further compliance with the court order.

State budget writers, under pressure to avoid new taxes and decrease spending, recommended a 1990 budget for MHMR of \$722 million, a 7 percent decrease from the 1989 level.

The budget board's recommendation for 1991 is 8 percent below the 1989 level and widely misses MHMR's request of \$1.04 billion.

"Until the budget is adequate, the state cannot expect to comply with the requirements of the settlement agreement and subsequent court orders," Pharis said.

The settlement includes requirements that patients be protected from harm and treated humanely, that facilities use medications properly,

and provide individual treatment and adequate services after clients are discharged, the report said.

"It is not inexpensive to develop and operate all of these components of a mental health system," Pharis wrote. "It costs, and it costs greatly."

But, he added, "Underfunding can only have the result of creating a fragmented, inadequate system that does not operate well and breaks down under the pressure of the demand for use."

The budget board recommendation is based on the assumption that one state hospital and two state schools can be closed during the next two years because of the declining number of patients, the report says.

'Hit and run' gives potential rape target safest, best defense

By Juliette Rizzo
STAFF WRITER

Hit and run: your two best choices if you chose to actively fight off an attacker.

Jim Stanton, a former instructor of martial arts, did just that when he was "attacked" by David Gilbert, a former Aston Hall resident director, in a self-defense demonstration concluding Texas A&M's C.A.R.E. (Creating Attitudes for a Rape-free Environment) Week.

Know your enemy and know yourself, Gilbert quoted from an ancient martial arts expert.

cage, chin or nose with a sharp upward action with the palm of your hand. For more reach, keep the hand open and, with a claw-like motion sweep across the face and aim for the eyes.

Stanton said to remember that what they would do to you would be less pleasant than what you do to them.

"You didn't ask to be attacked," he said. "They asked for it."

They also suggested hitting the attacker's diaphragm and groin instead of the stomach. Also, if grabbed from around the neck, the victim should slightly turn the head and tense the neck muscles so as to prevent possible choking.

These are the two key elements to getting yourself out of a possible rape situation, he said.

There are two methods of self protection a person can use in case of an attack: passive resistance and active resistance. Gilbert and Stanton focused on actively resisting an attacker.

"You must learn to be flexible as your situations change," Gilbert said.

A rape can happen anywhere at any time to anyone regardless of age, race or sex, he said. One needs to know ahead of time what to do in a given situation. The goal of self defense is to react immediately, use your body or other available weapons and escape.

Stanton said that if you choose active resistance, you must know if you have it in you to hit a person. If you don't, this method's not for you, he said.

Some of your best basic weapons for self defense are on your own body.

Gilbert, representing the attacker, and Stanton, the victim, demonstrated the use of the hand as a weapon. They suggested striking the attacker in the rib

A jacket or big piece of clothing can also be thrown over the attacker's face. When his eyes are covered, take the opportunity to run, Stanton said.

The victim also has a choice to passively resist, especially if the attacker is carrying a weapon.

"If the attacker has a gun," Stanton said, "it may be wise to do as he says."

Statistics show that most rapists do not go beyond the initial sex crime.

Melanie Strickland, the rape victim who spoke in a presentation Wednesday night, said the one thing that prevents many from fighting back is the fact that they may be putting themselves into greater danger. If you choose not to resist, she said, absorb details that will benefit a composite artist.

"If you decide not to fight, open your eyes really wide," Strickland said. "Also realize that you don't have to struggle."

"Whatever you decide is the best thing for you. It's all ethical. There's no wrong decision in what you do."

Former Rep. Jordan: Tower probe unfair; goes with territory

AUSTIN (AP) — Former U.S. Rep. Barbara Jordan said Thursday the intense public scrutiny of John Tower's private behavior may not be fair, but it goes with seeking such a public post as secretary of defense.

"When you are a public official, when you are in public office, you have this obligation to act ethically at a standard higher than that which is required for other citizens," she told an ethics seminar attended by about 200 Senate staff members and others.

Jordan was commenting in a question-and-answer session on the need to delve into such matters as the financial activities of former vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro's husband and Tower's alleged womanizing.

She said such probing is part of the territory.

"The public scrutinizes with depth the activities of persons in public office, and even of their

families," she said. "If you don't want this kind of public scrutiny, don't seek the office."

Jordan added, "I know that you probably say that is not fair. So what? What is fair?"

"No, it is not fair, but that doesn't make any difference," she said. "It is a requirement of the public servant. . . . You are going to have that kind of scrutiny, and you are going to feel that kind of pain that comes from this public inquiry into you as a person and what you do."

Jordan in 1966 became the first black woman Texas senator in the state's history and in 1972 was the first Southern black elected to Congress since Reconstruction. She gained national attention during the 1974 Watergate impeachment hearings.

She left Congress in 1978 for the University of Texas Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, where she teaches ethics.

El Paso considers plan to halt rash of car thefts

EL PASO (AP) — City police plan to team up with the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's office and Border Patrol to combat car theft.

The idea for the plan was launched during a meeting between U.S. Rep. Ron Coleman and three El Paso police officials, including Chief John Scagno. They plan to announce details next Thursday.

Coleman, an El Paso Democrat, called the police officials to his El Paso office Monday and asked for recommendations on what help Congress could provide to curb the tremendous auto-theft problem in the border city, Coleman spokesman John Jackley said.

Last year, 4,944 vehicles were reported stolen in El Paso, an 83.6 percent increase over 1987's figure.

"Auto thefts have reached epidemic proportions in El Paso," FBI spokesman Terry Kincaid said. "Obviously, it's organized crime."

Geography is also partly to blame. El Paso has 550,000 people, and its Mexican sister city of Juarez has an estimated population of 1.1 million. An El Paso shopping mall where

many of the thefts take place is less than five minutes from an international bridge.

Officials believe at least 60 percent of vehicles stolen in El Paso are driven into Juarez. They are sold there or farther south. In rural towns and villages in Chihuahua state, it is common to see option-laden American pickup trucks and utility vehicles parked in front of modest adobe and cinderblock houses.

El Paso police Capt. Greg Drolinger, who met with Coleman, said traffic going into Juarez needs to be checked. The police department has conducted spot checks periodically.

"We've been most productive when we've done bridge checks," he said. "All the statistics haven't been compiled, but I know that when we've checked southbound traffic, auto theft rates have dropped during the time we're on the bridges."

Critics have pointed out, though, that many auto thieves are believed to have driven into Mexico before cars are even reported stolen.

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