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MEDIA RELEASE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND  
POPULATION DEVELOPMENT WITH REGARD TO THE RELEASE OF  
THE REPORT-OF THE COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY INTO SINGLE CARE  
GRANTS

The Committee of Enquiry into Singie Care Grants was appointed by e  
the Minister for Nationa! Health and Welfare on 30\_December 1992, to  
Investigate the policy, administration and criteria for the payment of  
single care grants to severely or profomdly mentally handicapped  
children in terms of the Mental Health Act, 1973 (Act 18 of 1973).  
The Committee also had to make specific recommendations on the  
desirability or not that these children be certified in terms of section 9  
of the Act, before they could be considered for a grant.  
The Committee's report was handed to the Minister for National  
Health and Welfare, Dr E H Venter by the Chairman, Mr O A de  
Meyer, Chief Magistrate of Johannesburg on 8 June 1993.  
From the enquiry, it appears, that over the years the practice of  
certifying severely and profoundly mentally handicapped children in  
financial need was followed in order to place them in the single care of  
their parents. in terms of the Mental Heazth Act, 1973, before they  
could be considered eligible for a grant. The certification process did  
not actually contribute to a change in the care status of the child I,  
whilst in fact it contributed to their stigmatisation. This procedure  
was never the intention of the Iegislator. The Commitee recommends  
that in future these children not be paid grants in terms of the Mental  
Health Act, 1973 but in terms of the Social Assistance Aet, 1992 (Act  
59 of 1992) that these grants be known W

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Other important recommendations by the Committee are:

t that pmvisions be made for a transition period, so that beneficiaries who receive a grant in terms of the Mental Health Act, 1973 will still qualify for the grant in terms of the Social Assistance Act, 1992;

' a means test be instituted, but that payment be made on a sliding scale according to the needs of the specific child; the special needs of severely and profoundly mentally handicapped children between the ages of 1 to 18 years (and nm as presently 3 to 16 years) be taken into account with the determination of the grant;

t 9 children in day care centres also qualify for the grant whilst children in subsidised residential centres should not be considered; and that

t the payment of special care grants be managed like any other social grant.

The Minister for National Health and Welfare expressed the hope that the implementation of the Committee's recommendations will lead to a better dispensation for all severely and prof0undly mentally handicapped children in financial need and that the management of special care grants will now be more streamlined. '

END

ENQUIRY: MARl'e'TTE ROOS TEL: 012 3255100 X 197

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