Mental Health Policy and Practice Today. Ted R. Watkins and James W. Calicutt (Eds.).

Book Notes

Ted R. Watkins and James W. Calicutt (Eds.), *Mental Health Policy and Practice Today*. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 1997. $ 58.00 hardcover, $ 27.95 papercover.

Mental health policies and services have changed dramatically over the last thirty years. De-institutionalization, budgetary reductions and the involvement of mental health consumers in the formulation of programs are just some of the developments that have significantly altered the way that the needs of people with chronic mental illnesses have conventionally been addressed.

This edited collection of original chapters on current mental health issues by Watkins and Callicut provides an up to date account of the field of mental health policy and practice. Consisting of some twenty chapters, the book ranges over topics as diverse as community care for people with mental illnesses to the role of managed care in service provision. The book is divided into four parts. The first provides an introductory overview of key mental health policy issues including a discussion of issues such as de-institutionalization, the role of the courts, politics in mental health and the utilization of personnel. Part II consists of four chapters that address the knowledge base on which mental health services depend. Part III focuses on the mental health needs of special groups such as children, the homeless, women, the elderly and minority groups. The final part contains three chapters that speculate on the future of mental health services in the coming century. These chapters pay particular attention to issues of technology, managed care and the intersection between the criminal justice and mental health systems.

Although Watkins and Callicut's book is designed primarily for students in social work programs, it will be a useful addition to the literature and should be widely used in related fields such as psychiatry, nursing and health services administration. It will also be helpful to members of the lay public who are interested in mental health policies and programs. Its uncomplicated style and comprehensiveness will ensure that it is widely used.