

June 4, 1985

Alfred Bertagnoll, M.D.  
Catholic Medical Center  
100 McGregor Street  
Manchester, NH 03102

Dear Dr. Bertagnoll,

Dr. T. Meehan was a staff psychiatrist at the V.A. Hospital in Northport a few years ago. During that time, ECT was administered at the V.A. under the general supervision of consultants from the Department of Psychiatry of SUNY at Stony Brook. Before Dr. Meehan joined the staff, my associate Dr. Richard Abrams had set up the unit, and after he left, I supervised it.

During Dr. Meehan's service at the V.A., he carried out treatments in this unit, and was considered sufficiently adept that he continued to treat patients for a time. I cannot recall a time when I observed his treatments.

To the best of my recollection, Dr. Meehan did not have any formal training in convulsive therapy at this University. The 'training' was passed on from one therapist to the next. Nor can I recall the length of time that he 'ran' the ECT unit, since such assignment was the responsibility of the clinical director, Dr. Robert Derman.

As you well know, there is no formal accrediting process for ECT in the United States. It was a recommendation of the American Psychiatric Association Task Force that a continuing committee on ECT be established at the APA, to develop guidelines for training; but the leaders of the APA have seen fit not to create such a committee since the report was accepted in 1978. In this climate, judgement as to Dr. Meehan's credentials must be based on your own criteria.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.  
Professor of Psychiatry