

PSYCHIATRIC FAILINGS TOLD

By **FRANK CAREY**

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ATLANTIC CITY, N. J., May 12.—(AP)—Privately practicing psychiatrists who refuse to make house calls were told today the public may cease to regard them as doctors of medicine.

Dr. Henry A. Davidson, a county hospital psychiatric official, declared private psychiatrists constitute more than half of the Nations psychiatrists and that a fourth of them "have abandoned traditional symbols of medicine: the stethoscope, the little black bag, the prescription blank."

DOCTRINAL REASONS.

Davidson, assistant superintendent of the Essex County Hospital at Cedar Grove, N. J., said such men "have excellent doctrinal reasons for not making calls"—such as a feeling that the family doctor is better able to cope with psychiatric situations in the "emergency" stage. But he added:

"Unwillingness to make a call in a psychiatric emergency is viewed by the public as an abandonment of a patient in need: as a breach of a sound physician's tradition.

"And refusal to do physical examinations or to write prescriptions makes the patient wonder what the psychiatrist can do that the psychologist can not."

In a report to the 111th annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Assn. (APA), Dr. Davidson said:

ACCEPT CHORES.

"If the private psychiatrist wants to retain the prerogatives and status of the doctor of medicine, he should accept the traditional responsibilities of the physician-specialist: making calls, signing commitment papers, writing prescriptions, testifying in court, doing physical examinations.

"Aside from a tendency to drift away from identification as a form of medical practice, private practice psychiatry," Dr. Davidson said, "is beset with another major problem."

This, he said, is "a basic economic dilemma which makes it hard for families to pay fees for which the psychiatrist can afford to work."

FEES HIGH.

He explained that the psychiatrist spends 45 to 60 minutes per patient, whereas "other practitioners may see from four to ten patients an hour." Thus, he added, "psychiatric fees are relatively high, while psychiatrists' incomes are relatively low."

He said the gross income of psychiatrists averages about \$24,000 annually, the net income about \$18,000, with the gross range varying from \$6,000 to over \$100,000.