



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Sandra Gioia Treadway
Librarian of Virginia

November 14, 2014

Helen Cullyer, Program Officer
Mellon Foundation
140 E. 62nd Street
New York, NY 10065

Dear Ms Cullyer,

It is with great pleasure that I write to endorse the *Central Lunatic Asylum for Colored Insane Digital Archives Project* as a worthy candidate to receive funding through the Mellon Foundation.

The Library of Virginia has worked closely with Dr. Davis and his team since the inception of the Central State Hospital Digital Archives Project in 2008 as the lead Records Management authority in Virginia and as the Archives of the Commonwealth. We have always been and remain very eager to support this important project, especially as it makes the transition from a digitization project to one focused on access since the Library does not have sufficient staffing or resources to execute mass digitization and access projects like this one to better serve collections material to patrons.

The Central State Hospital Collection digitized by the project team will provide a massive repository of medical records for African Americans from 1870 to 1970. Access to such a vast amount of data, the focus of this funding request, will make it possible to chart changes in psychiatric treatment and medical ethics at a fine-grained level over the course of a century.

Perhaps most important, the data-set reflects a rarely discussed aspect of medical and psychiatric treatment of African-Americans during segregation, making it possible to explore the difference that existed the care and treatment of white and black patients.

From an archival standpoint, this project will play an especially crucial role in pioneering a model for a storage and access system that will provide varying levels of access to ensure that privacy protected information (e.g. medical data) are handled according to applicable state and federal law governing the treatment of medical data.

Put simply, *Central Lunatic Asylum for Colored Insane Digital Archives Project* is one of those rare initiatives that promise to make many significant contributions to the medical, historical, and archival fields.

Most enthusiastically,

John D. Metz, Ph.D.
Deputy for Collections and Programs

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