



STATE OF KANSAS

## Office of the Attorney General

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Curt T. Schneider  
Attorney General

February 16, 1978

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINION NO. 78- 72

Mr. Steven E. Worcester  
Graham County Attorney  
413 North Pomeroy  
Hill City, Kansas 67642

Re: Counties and County Officers--Hospitals--Employment  
of Dentists

Synopsis: County hospital board of trustees is authorized to employ a dentist, and equip, operate and maintain a dental clinic in connection with county hospital.

\* \* \*

Dear Mr. Worcester:

You inquire whether a county hospital created and operated pursuant to K.S.A. 1977 Supp. 19-1801, *et seq.* is authorized through its board of trustees to employ a dentist. I understand that the hospital anticipates paying the dentist's salary as well as providing the necessary office space, equipment and administrative services.

Your attention is directed to the provisions of K.S.A. 19-18,117 which provides thus:

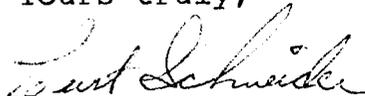
"The governing board of a hospital created or operated under the provisions of article 18 of chapter 19 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, or acts amendatory thereof or supplemental thereto, is authorized to construct or reconstruct, maintain, operate, improve, equip, lease, rent or enlarge medical, dental and optometric clinics for use in connection with the hospital under such terms and conditions as shall be approved by such governing board." [Emphasis added.]

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The express language of this statute clearly permits the governing board of the county hospital to maintain, operate and equip a dental clinic for use in connection with the hospital. It appears from your letter that the anticipated dental services will in fact be used in connection with the hospital, so the question remains whether the proposed operation will fall within the definition of clinic as used in the statute, *supra*. The statute, of course, does not define the term "clinic." Absent such provision it is the rule of statutory construction in this jurisdiction that "words in common use are to be given their natural and ordinary meaning." *Roda v. Williams*, 195 Kan, 507, 511, 407 P.2d 741 (1965); *State ex rel. v. City of Overland Park*, 215 Kan. 700, 712, 713, 527 P.2d 1340 (1974). See generally, 2A Sutherland, *Statutory Construction*, § 47.28 (4th ed. 1973). Webster's Third International Dictionary defines "clinic" thus: "an institution connected with a hospital or medical school where diagnosis and treatment are made available to outpatients." The suggested dental services to be offered by the hospital appear easily to fall within the parameters of this definition. And, to staff such clinical operations, the board of trustees for the hospital is authorized under K.S.A. 1977 Supp. 19-1804(f) to "appoint . . . necessary assistants and personnel . . . ."

Accordingly it is my considered opinion that the county hospital board of trustees is empowered under the above discussed statutes to employ a dentist and equip, maintain and operate a dental clinic in connection with the county hospital.

Yours truly,



CURT T. SCHNEIDER  
Attorney General

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