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Leasing, Buying

While there is increasing support for the purchase of the Halloran VA Hospital buildings, it would seem that this is the second best course of action to be followed with the closedown of the facility scheduled to take place in slightly more than two months.

For one thing, time is short.

Even with congressional authorization, many steps would have to be taken before the deal could be completed. If the federal agency intended to buy, the state might extend the lease pending negotiations. But until congressional approval is forthcoming, the VA still has to follow its schedule of ceasing operations by June 1 and clearing out entirely by June 30.

Also, the Veterans Administration has stated clearly that it is not in favor of purchasing Halloran. A report along those lines forced Congressman Murphy's purchase-enabling bill into a committee pigeonhole.

If it didn't like Halloran as a permanent facility once, the VA is not likely to change its opinion at this time.

That disapproval is important.

House approval of any proposal for the Halloran purchase is not likely. Even if Congressman Murphy tucks the proposal on to a bill, sponsored by Congressman Rankin, authorizing the construction of an additional 16,000 beds for the VA.

Staten Islanders will be giving Congressman Murphy their support, but the odds weigh heavily against passage.

This proposal, of course, is but one of the many near-desperate attempts to save Halloran. For alertness Congressman Murphy is to be praised, but it would seem that the cause is a losing one.

Much more significant is the promise by Governor Dewey that he, within the next two weeks, will make a thorough study of the possibilities of renewing Halloran's lease.

Unless the governor was willing to do that, the case was closed. Now there is a chance.

Mr. Dewey seems fully aware of the situation. He knows what Halloran's closing will mean to the patients and employees; he knows, too, that the state's mental patients also need care.

As long as that understanding exists, some sort of a satisfactory solution may be realized.

March 28, 1950

HALLORAN TRANSFERS TO AWAIT DECISION

MAR 28

Patients to Remain In Hospital for Now, Murphy Assured by VA

(Advance Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON — The Veterans Administration will transfer no patients from Halloran Hospital to other veterans facilities until the matter of whether a new lease for the property can be effected is entirely cleared up, it was announced today by Congressman James J. Murphy, Staten Island Democrat.

The Veterans Administration recently announced that the property would be turned back to the State of New York by June 30 and that all patients at the hospital would be transferred to other veterans facilities in the metropolitan area by June 1. All new admissions were ordered stopped.

State legislators from Staten Island, veterans groups and Congressman Murphy have since asked the governor to renew the VA's lease on the property and it has been indicated that the governor will make a decision in a week or two. Murphy said, however, that some veteran groups feared that many of the patients may be transferred to other institutions before the decision is made.

No Transfers Now

"I have taken this matter up with the Veterans Administration," Murphy said today, "and have been promised that no patients will be transferred until this matter is settled. I have been told that no transfers will be made until late April or early May and that the entire picture should be cleared up long before."

Congressman Murphy said this promise of no transferrals was made by Maj. O. W. Clark, deputy administrator of the VA. The major told Murphy, however, that the order banning new admissions still stands.