

April 14, 1950

HUGE MONEY WASTE SEEN IF HALLORAN SHUTS DOWN

VA Has Spent \$300,000 On Improvements, States Spokesman at Hospital

By ERWIN ENDRESS

More than \$300,000 of taxpayers' money, invested in capital improvements and alterations in Halloran VA Hospital, will be wasted unless Gov. Thomas E. Dewey reverses an earlier decision, to force the closing of Halloran this June, it was learned today.

This amount, invested during the past two years, four months, that the Veterans Administration has been operating the facility, comprises the federal agency's prime investment in fitting the big hospital for the care and treatment of veteran-patients.

This was made known by a hospital spokesman, who said the VA, in developing Halloran into one of the nation's foremost medical centers for the care and treatment of paraplegic, tumor and tuberculosis cases, has invested thousands of dollars in alterations or improvements which, by their very nature, cannot be reclaimed by the federal government if the hospital is forced to close.

Thousands Invested

The estimated total does not include other thousands of dollars poured out of federal coffers into the Halloran project during World War II, comprising permanent and semi-permanent improvements later taken over by the Veterans Administration.

Since the VA took over the project less than two and a-half years ago, the Halloran spokesman said, about \$150,000 in maintenance improvements has been invested. This sum includes everything from the cost of building ramps for paraplegic wheelchairs to installation of oxygen manifold equipment, a job completed two days before the sudden announcement March 16 that Halloran would close in June.

Just 12 months ago, it was pointed out, \$18,000 in federal moneys was poured into Halloran for the fitting out of a modern center for the treatment of acute cases of tuberculosis.

This included extensive partitioning, painting and installation of special equipment. The investment will be irrecoverably lost if Halloran Hospital closes this June, medical men say.

Money Seen Wasted

Halloran DAV Hits Transfers From Hospital

Sends Vigorous Protest To Gen. Gray Asking Halt Until Dewey Decision

A crisp and pointed letter assailing the continued transfer of patients and personnel from Halloran VA Hospital is on its way to Veterans Administrator Carl R. Gray from Halloran Chapter, Disabled American Veterans, today.

The letter, voted at a meeting in the hospital music room last night, minces few words. It asks why beds are being emptied while thousands of veterans need hospital treatment, and asks that the transfer be halted until Governor Dewey announces a final decision on extending the VA's lease. And it suggests that the very transfer may influence Dewey to refuse extension.

"Halloran VA Chapter, Disabled American Veterans, vigorously opposes the transfer of Halloran patients and personnel to the VA hospital at Fort Hamilton," the letter declares. "Thousands of veterans in the vicinity of New York City need hospital treatment. Why keep these veterans out of Hamilton hospital?"

300 Patients Moved

"Some 300 patients have been moved from Halloran to Hamilton. We were given to understand that the VA would retain Halloran VA Hospital until the hospital in the lower part of Manhattan was completed, provided that the governor of New York would approve an extension of the present lease.

"It would seem to us that Governor Dewey might feel justified if he turned down your plea for the need of Halloran facilities, while personnel and patients are being moved to other installations. Can't this migration be stopped until Governor Dewey makes a decision?"

"From the contacts we've made with other commanders of DAV chapters in this vicinity, they all join with us in the plea that vacant hospital beds be made available to sick veterans. We now have 300 beds vacant at Halloran. Please advise us what help you can give us."

Copies of the letter will be sent to DAV chapters and other veterans organizations throughout the city, it was announced.

Appeals to Dewey

The unit announced receipt of a letter from Leo B. Wheeler, state commander, declaring that the state organization is exerting every effort to have Halloran retained

April 15, 1950

Sen. Braisted Sees Chance for Halloran

Says Transfers Do Not Forecast State Decision

Senator John M. Braisted Jr. had a letter from the governor's office today which, he said, indicates clearly that the present transfer of patient personnel from Halloran VA Hospital does not mean that the hospital may not still be continued as a veteran's facility.

The senator said that many Island veteran groups have expressed to him the opinion that the evacuation of patients from the Island hospital creates that the state

has already made up its mind not to renew the VA's lease.

The senator said he was confident that this is not so and made public a letter received yesterday, from James C. Hagerty, secretary to the governor, to support his belief.

The letter reads:

"On behalf of Governor Dewey I acknowledge your letter of April 3.

"The New York State and federal officials are still continuing a discussion on the hospital and I sincerely hope that a solution can be worked out to the best advantage of both the child wards of the state and the veterans."

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And doctors and administrators are quick to point out that setting up a completely-equipped tuberculosis center that is used for only a year is "far from economical."

While the investment made in installing equipment for the care of paraplegic patients has been smaller, the loss—in both human and financial terms—may be even greater.

The Halloran buildings used by paraplegics are said to be ideally suited to their needs. They are one-story structures, equipped with ramps, permitting the patients to move about freely. The U-shaped buildings feature a center courtyard ideally suited to the needs of paraplegics.

Should such patients be moved elsewhere, it is pointed out, they may not find as convenient quarters, and may have to use elevators and other mechanical equipment in order to move about. To such patients, medical men say, it may mean the difference between being independent or dependent.

Improvements Listed

The Halloran spokesman said thousands of dollars have been spent in the course of less than 2½ years in setting up elaborately-equipped manual arts, physical and occupational therapy centers, medical research laboratories, installation of deep therapy equipment, and in normal interior painting and maintenance.

More than \$1,000 was spent in installing bedside earphones in wards, while another \$2,500 went to install outlets for bed lamps. Such investments cannot be reclaimed, it was emphasized.

It was pointed out, too, that operation of thousands of dollars worth of modern X-ray equipment made necessary the setting up of special booster equipment by the Staten Island Edison Corporation to increase voltage.

The probable losses, estimated as they are, do not include the actual costs of equipment installed, since most such equipment could be reclaimed and reinstalled elsewhere.

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Copies of the letter will be sent to DAV chapters and other veterans organizations throughout the city, it was announced.

Appeals to Dewey

The unit announced receipt of a letter from Leo B. Wheeler, state commander, declaring that the state organization is exerting every effort to have Halloran retained. He has made a personal appeal to Dewey, Wheeler reported.

The chapter also was told that William Dodd, past national commander and a New Jersey resident, has been conducting a spirited campaign among Jersey veterans to rally support for retention. The state's congressmen have been urged to back a measure providing for the purchase of Halloran by the government.

George DuBois, commander, presided. The next meeting will be May 11.

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