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# PATIENTS PROTEST SHIFT AT HALLORAN

## Transfer of Paraplegics To Distant Facilities Draws Fire from Vets

By ERWIN ENDRESS

Patient enrollment at Halloran VA Hospital today faded below the 400-mark under impetus of a stepped-up transfer rate and amid the continuing protests of paraplegic veteran-patients who call the impending Halloran closedown a "disgrace."

Key to their opposition was the movement in the past two weeks of 11 paraplegic patients to hospitals in Richmond, Va., and Framingham, Mass., and the prospective movement of others to these "far-distant places."

While there appears little hope that any protest by the patients can deter the federal-state decision under which the Halloran tract will be returned to the state Department of Mental Hygiene for use by Willowbrook State School, the paraplegic veterans continue to press forward a program of opposition to Halloran's closing.

### Transfer Begins

Hospital officials admitted that the transfer of paraplegic patients, many of which maintain homes in the communities bordering on Halloran, is already underway. Eight last week were transferred to McGuire General Hospital in Richmond, and three others left yesterday for the VA hospital in Framingham.

In addition, 27 tuberculosis patients yesterday were sent by train for treatment at the VA hospital in Sunmount, N. Y.

Halloran's officials said all paraplegic patients had been polled as to their preference of hospital, and that "every effort" is being made to send them to the treatment point of their choice.

While it will be impossible to meet all their demands, the majority of the service-connected patients will soon be moved to another hospital in the metropolitan area, Kingsbridge VA Hospital in Bronx, a spokesman said.

"But the Bronx hospital," he said, "has neither the room nor the facilities to care for all the paraplegics who want to go there."

Records show the current patient census at Halloran is 391, reflecting a drop of 87 since the initial announcement Jan. 4 that the hospital would be closed down by Feb. 15.

The future status of general medical cases is being studied today by hospital officials. The study is to determine how many patients will have completed treatment by Feb. 15, and how many will have to be moved to the Bronx hospital for further treatment. In any case, the stepped-up transfer rate will be adhered to.

Once the Halloran area has been returned to the state, the buildings will be rehabilitated for use by mental patients as part of the Willowbrook State School. Slated to move into the area are 700 mental patients from the Sampson Naval Training Station, Geneva, N. Y., which has been in use as a mental facility, but which will soon be taken over by the Air Force.