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\$6 Million Geriatric Unit In City To Launch Ohio's New Mental Health Plan

Hospital Set For Toledo After Center Is Built

By ANDY COTA

Blade Columbus Bureau

COLUMBUS — An overhaul of the state's mental health program will start with construction of a new \$6 million geriatric center in Toledo, Governor Rhodes announced today.

The Toledo center is part of a \$44.5 million construction program aimed at ending "the antiquated and obsolete mental hospital system as we have known it for centuries," the governor said.

Funding will be provided by revenue bonds retired by patient fees, as authorized by voters last November.

Besides the geriatric-center program for elderly patients who do not need to be in mental hospitals, there will be three psychiatric hospitals to provide specialized care for disturbed young persons.

These are to be in Toledo, Cincinnati, and Columbus. Cost is estimated at \$4.5 million each, and construction is planned for late 1971.

Toledo To Be First

Geriatric centers also are to be constructed at Massillon and Columbus, and additions to serve needs of elderly will be built at Dayton, Longview State Hospital in Cincinnati, Hawthorn State Hospital in Northfield, and the Athens Mental Health Center.

Martin Janis, director of mental hygiene and corrections, said the Toledo center will be the first and will serve as a prototype for the six others. Different architects will be used for each center, but all will be expected to follow closely the plan for the Toledo facility.

Each center will provide three levels of service for between 350 to 400 patients.

Mr. Janis said the first floor of the building will be used for those who can care for themselves but who need minimal care in a controlled environment. The second floor will be for patients needing nursing care, and the third for those needing more intensive care, the director explained.

Completion In 1971

Ground will be broken for all the geriatric centers in 1970, and all are scheduled for completion in 1971. They will provide beds for about 3,000 persons.

Governor Rhodes, although he will not be in office past 1970, said the legislature will be asked to appropriate another \$31 million in 1971 for another 3,000 beds for the geriatric program.

The governor said this will give Ohio one of the most complete and comprehensive mental health programs in the nation.

As of Sept. 30, there were about 5,700 persons 64 or older in the state mental hospitals who could be transferred to geriatrics centers, according to Mr. Janis. He said if these patients could be put into new facilities, the patient load at each state hospital could be brought down to about 500 to 700 persons.

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An architect's drawing of the geriatric center proposed for Toledo appears on Page 17.

Geriatric Unit

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Although the number of hospital facilities will increase, Mr. Janis said, operating costs, always a problem for the state, should remain about the same since the new centers will require fewer personnel to do the same job being done in the older state hospitals.

As part of the phasing out of the present state hospital program, a number of buildings are to be razed next year, including four cottages built in 1888 at Toledo State Hospital. They are cottages G, H, J, and K, each housing about 65 patients.

The Toledo geriatrics center will be constructed on Arlington Avenue on the Toledo State Hospital grounds near the new Medical College of Ohio, Mr. Janis said.

It will have private, semi-private, and four-bed units. Patients will dine on a family-style basis in groups of not more than 30, and there will be sun decks, a library, gardens, a snack shop, chapel, and recreational and therapeutic facilities available to all, Mr. Janis said.

To assist in the development of the overall program, Governor Rhodes appointed an 11-member advisory council, headed by Dr. George Harding, Sr., a Worthington psychiatrist. Members, including Jay J. Shuer, of Toledo, will be charged with developing programs for integrating state mental hospitals into community mental health and mental retardation programs.

Governor Rhodes said this partnership between the state and local communities is to be expanded to bring mental health and mental retardation treatment and care within a few miles of every Ohioan.