

Dominican Expansion Gets Final Approval

Hospitals - Dominican Hospital 6-11-81

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Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital Wednesday was awarded a certificate of need authorizing it to expand the present hospital by 87 beds and to build a 28-bed inpatient psychiatric facility separate from the main structure.

The certificate was signed Wednesday by Henry Zaretsky, director of the Statewide Office of Health Planning and Development. The action climax-

ed a two-year effort by Dominican and its supporters here to gain official approval of a project which has an estimated total cost of close to \$20 million.

Sister Josephine Sullivan, hospital administrator, said this morning:

"We are thrilled that the state has finally approved the certificate of need. Our expansion will meet many of the pressing and, in some cases, urgent health care needs facing the people of this area.

"Now we face the challenge of

building and paying for the new facilities, a challenge to which we enthusiastically look forward."

State Sen. Henry Mello told The Sentinel: "I am very pleased about the certificate of need decision. I am delighted that we were able to give some aid to Dominican up here in Sacramento."

Sister Josephine today announced the hospital will hold a groundbreaking ceremony July 17 on the helicopter pad behind the hospital building. Do-

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minican officials project that the psychiatric unit, which will be located on hospital grounds off Paul Sweet Road, will be completed in 1982 and that the hospital's new north wing will be completed in 1983.

The certificate signed by Zaretsky is conditioned by the requirement that Santa Cruz County delicense all of its medical-surgical beds and all of its psychiatric beds at the former county general hospital.

This delicensing will put the county out of the hospital care business totally, completing a process that began in the early 1970s.

Specifically authorized in the Dominican expansion are the addition of 30 medical-surgical beds, 12 pediatric beds, four intensive care beds, four transitional care beds, 37 skilled nursing beds, an operating suite, expanded radiology services and increased therapy, laboratory and other ancillary capabilities.

The 28-bed inpatient psychiatric facility will provide care for both private and public patients and will meet a highly critical need, according to Elinor Hall, county health administrator, and officials of the Mid-Coast Health Systems Agency. The additional medical-surgical beds

will ease the problem of bed shortages that comes up often at Dominican's present 150-bed hospital. The 12 pediatric beds will form the only licensed pediatric unit in the Santa Cruz area. The intensive and transitional care beds will alleviate the shortage in this critical care area, while the new skilled nursing beds will do much to ease the shortage in this area, according to the MHSA.

Dominican began planning the expansion in 1976 and has pursued state permission for it the last two years in an occasionally stormy process involving many hearings at the county, MHSA and state levels. At all these levels the project got unanimous approval. Thousands of county residents supported the project and urged its approval.

Public support was a big factor in gaining the approvals. Another big factor was that during the past two years Dominican occupancy has been pushing 100 percent, while for more than six years the occupancy level has ranged between 85 to 95 percent.

During their 40 years in the county the Adrian Dominican Sisters have consistently had to expand their facilities to serve the health care needs of their patients.