

THE SENTINEL EDITORIALS

New Health Center

SANTA CRUZ county has a sparkling new health center.

It was dedicated yesterday before an impressive audience including Dr. Malcolm Merrill, state health director, regional, county and city officials.

It's a far cry from the days when the county's public health department was operated in a one-room office in conjunction with the county hospital.

Today the health center has the first major laboratory facilities in its history, clinical rooms, a central filing office, a multi-purpose room useful for assemblies or the showing of films, separate facilities for the mental health division, for the public health dentist, complete facilities for the nurses, the sanitarians, etc.

The total facility should be able to serve the county for many years, greatly improving our ability to maintain high standards of public health in an efficient manner.

In conjunction with the dedication ceremonies, a Health Fair is under way at the center with display booths from all of the many volunteer organizations that aid the health and public welfare programs in the county.

In fact, the exhibits from the various volunteer and Community Chest agencies contribute a great deal toward the appreciation by the general public of just what is being done in the county, both at government and volunteer levels to provide us with good facilities.

The battle to improve public health, to aid the handicapped and the sick, is a constant fight. At times the odds may seem a little one-sided, but year by year these agencies in co-operation with the government programs are scoring victory after victory.

There are displays from the Heart association, the American Cancer society, the Polio Foundation, the Community Council, Red Cross, the Crippled Children's society, County Medical Association auxiliary, Disabled Veterans' auxiliary, Senior Citizens Opportunities.

And others on behalf of the Santa Cruz Handicraft class for the blind, the Visiting Nurses' association, the hospital auxiliaries, the County Youth committee, United Cerebral Palsy group, and others.

Tomorrow the center will be open with the Health Fair from 10 a. m. until 4 p. m. and Saturday from 9 a. m. until noon.

It is gratifying to see so many volunteers contributing both time and money to keep the fight going against disease—both physical and mental.

The field of public health is still young in America, yet it has made fantastic progress. The days when tuberculosis, for example, was a dreaded scourge are gone although the fight is one that must be waged continually in order to preserve the gains.

We are entering an era where the problem of mental illness is becoming greater. Perhaps, it is only greater today because we are able to recognize some of the causes and realize that there are cures.

The combat is still in the early stages, but with the aid of medical science, and the general acceptance of the fact that there is such a thing as mental illness and that most cases can be cured, has led to a most satisfactory approach toward victory in one of our most dangerous fields.

A health center alone does not mean that we have accomplished our goal, but the center will become a big step ahead in providing us with the facilities to meet the health problems as they occur and to spur greater interest in the field.

It's pleasing to note the progress, and to realize that a strong corps of volunteers stand ready to help in every way they can.

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