

Dominican Hospital Reaffirms Pledge To 30-Bed Inpatient Psychiatric Unit

Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital officials have reaffirmed their pledges to provide 53 skilled nursing care beds and a 30-bed inpatient psychiatric unit if they are granted expansion approval by the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development.

Dominican has submitted an application for a certificate of need for a 114-bed

expansion program that will include 47 medical-surgical beds, the 53 skilled nursing care beds, eight critical care beds and six pediatric beds.

A separate CON application will be required for the proposed inpatient psychiatric unit if the county Board of Supervisors expresses a desire for Dominican to

provide this facility.

"Through a unanimous vote of our Board of Directors and my own signature, we have made a commitment to the people of Santa Cruz. We will honor that commitment," Sister Josephine Sullivan, Dominican administrator, responded when asked what is to stop the hospital from adding acute care facilities and

defaulting on its commitment to skilled nursing or the inpatient psychiatric unit.

Wayne Boss, associate administrator, added: "The 53 skilled nursing care beds are a requirement of Dominican's agreement with the county, and we would be very agreeable to making all elements of the expansion and the inpatient psychiatric unit written contingencies of the state permit to expand."

Sister Josephine also was asked:

"If you are really concerned about the need for an inpatient psychiatric facility, why do you need to make it a contingency of your expansion?"

She said that the project is a comprehensive response to the health care needs of the people of Santa Cruz. Each component of the project is interrelated and interdependent on the other. It would be neither financially nor physically possible for the hospital to support the psychiatric unit without the expansion, she explained. She noted, as well, that the project is the result of five years of planning by community leaders, physicians and health care professionals.

During the discussions it was brought out that Dominican filed its CON application in a 700-page document last month, that the state had asked for clarification of several points and additional information on others and that this supplemental information will be forwarded to the state Monday.

One concern troubling a social service representative was the possible deleterious effect Dominican's expansion could have on Community Hospital of Santa Cruz, an AMI health care facility.

"Even at 31 percent occupancy through fiscal year 1978-79, Community Hospital, according to public documents, was very profitable for AMI. Since that time, Community hospital's patient census has grown, and will continue to grow with Dominican operating at or about 100 percent occupancy," Boss responded.

Boss said that Community's growth could be expected to continue for the three or four years Dominican's expansion will take.

REFERENCE

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