

Allotment Fund Change Asked To Save Rock Hill Hospital

A Rock Hill delegation made an urgent plea yesterday before the South Carolina Hospital Advisory Committee of the State Board of Health to revise the state priority plan for hospital fund allotment to help save popular and efficient but ancient St. Philips Hospital from closing.

The 40-year-old structure will close its doors on September 1, and refuse admittance to any more patients after August 15 unless it feels there is sufficient interest in rebuilding the institution which is operated by the Roman Catholic Sisters of St. Francis.

Yesterday the Hospital Advisory Committee passed a recommendation which may assist St. Philips to stay open and continue to serve the York County area. Recently the private hospital has been rated as serving at 120 per cent bed capacity, meaning that it has had more patients than the recommended beds for the hospital.

The Council recommended to the Executive Committee of the State Board of Health that "Whereas they are in full sympathy with the hospital needs of York County they have no alternative but to recommend that the State Agency follow the established priority list of the State Plan for the fiscal year 1958-1959 and recommend further that the State Agency expedite the securing of releases from those counties above York County on the priority list who do not wish to make an application for funds."

The inference was that the State's Hospital Advisory Council would not favor the needs of York over some 14 other counties which are ahead on the priority list just because there is an emergency situation in York County.

YORK GROUP

The Rock Hill delegation, which included Senator Robert Hays of York, Mayor John Harden of Rock Hill, Sam J. Breen, Tom Gettys, president of the Rock Hill Chamber of Commerce, and two sisters from St. Philips, including Sister Solana, Mother Superior of the institution, argued that the state plan for priority of allotments of federal funds under the Hill-Burton act was resulting in large sums of money for hospital beds in certain parts of the state which were now only 30 per cent occupied. They referred specifically to the Medical College Hospital in Charleston.

Dr. G. S. T. Peeples, State Health Officer, told the Rock Hill delegation that though he could not speak for the State Board's executive committee, nor for the advisory council, he suggested as an individual that the York people contact the hospital authorities in other counties above York on the priority lists to see if they are requesting matching funds from local sources to meet the amount available from Hill-Burton federal funds. If these counties do not speak up at this time,

or in other words waive their priority rights in favor of York County, then the State Plan matching funds might be offered next to a hospital in York, presumably for use by St. Philips.

At stake is some \$3,737,386.00 in federal matching funds for fiscal 1959 for South Carolina. But the State Plan is already obligated to Anderson County for nearly \$1,000,000 to finish its program for that county.

LOCAL FUNDS

Representatives of St. Philips appearing at the hearing said that they thought the Order of St. Francis could find about \$500,000 at this time. Several representatives of large mills in the Rock Hill area told the Council yesterday that they thought a payroll deduction plan could be supported in the county among some mill workers, as much as \$1 per week per employee for one year. There is also a possibility that mill firms might contribute sums if the employees get behind a fund-raising program.

Just what the economic effect of the closing of the hospital would mean was not presented in full but one Rock Hillian said he thought there were 80 employees for the 90 bed institution. Much of the service of St. Philips is charity.

The Rock Hill group proposed that some other hospital group in the state might waive the right to perhaps \$500,000, in order that St. Philips could make emergency repairs and makeshift arrangements in the next few weeks to stay open while the assurance of state-wide interest, as well as an earnest indication of the State Board, would help the local interests in the Rock Hill area to successfully launch a fund raising program for an adequate, new hospital.

Presiding at the Advisory Council meeting yesterday was Henry

G. Garrison, chairman. Mr. Garrison had a telegram to the council from Congressman Robert W. Hemphill urging any assistance possible in helping "the people of Rock Hill in saving St. Philips."

He wrote: "Any consideration or help you can give in saving St. Philips would be a great act of mercy and service to the people of York County who have been served adequately and efficiently by St. Philips for many, many years . . ."

Meanwhile a Rock Hill newspaper reporter, covering the meeting, commented that an appeal by that newspaper recently has brought in pledges of some \$25,000, and he expected more would be realized.

At the meeting facts sheets were distributed indicating that between 1947-58 \$55,806,577 in hospital projects had been authorized of which \$38,537,000 in projects had been completed, \$10,579,268 were under construction, and \$6,689,420 were projects initially approved in South Carolina.

The federal share has amounted to \$25,165,145.

Whereas in 1947 there were 13 areas in the state without general hospital beds there were in 1958 only four areas without.

The State:
AUGUST 1, 1958



In About Two Weeks, This Rock Hill Landmark Will Be Torn Down

St. Philip's Hospital Will Be Torn Down

A contract was let this morning with Rutledge and Co. of Rock Hill to tear down the St. Phillip's Hospital building on Confederate Avenue in Rock Hill.

Edward W. Gilgan of Peoria, Ill., administrative manager, The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, made the contract with the Rock Hill firm.

John T. Roddey of Rock Hill, whose firm handles legal arrangements for the property and nearby properties owned by the Order, said today that he knew of no plans for use of the site. The adjoining home formerly used as a

home for the nursing Sisters has been sold, but the Order still owns the children's annex and the hospital site.

The hospital was operated in Rock Hill by the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis for 23 years prior to October, 1958, when the last remaining patient, Mrs. Maria Crockett, was moved to Divine Saviour Hospital in York. Beds, mattresses and household equipment were sold and the technical equipment was made available to other such institutions or nursing homes.

Medical records and files were

transferred to York County Hospital.

Closing of the hospital followed desperate efforts to obtain enough money to build a new hospital. Even after the hospital closed in the fall of 1958 there came a glimmer of hope for a new hospital for the Order in Rock Hill. That was when Charleston County failed to make use of its Hill-Burton allocation and an offer of up to \$1,300,000 in federal funds was made, provided the funds could be matched with local money.

The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis had agreed to put

up \$500,000 toward a new hospital. This amount was to be added to other funds to be raised locally and used to match federal funds which were sought. An estimated \$829,000 in federal funds was considered necessary to help replace the outdated 123 bed hospital which had been condemned by building inspector, C. M. Freeman as unsafe.

W. C. Rutledge of Rutledge and Co. said today that work of demolition will probably begin in about two weeks and that a part of the materials in the old hospital will be offered for sale. He bought the old building as it now is.

Friday, July 8, 1960

-Evening Herald, Rock Hill