

REMARKS BY
SECRETARY OF STATE TOM ADAMS
(Acceptance of deed to land for new Mental Health Institute)
University of South Florida, October 26, 1967

This is a great day for the people of the Tampa Bay area, for our State mental health program, indeed, for all of Florida.

For we are doing more today than merely, accepting the deed to a tract of land for a new mental health facility. We are embarking on a new era in the field of mental health in this State.

This isn't just another mental hospital we are preparing to build. It is literally a new breed of institution for Florida.

In both design and purpose, it constitutes a radical departure from our existing State hospitals.

It will provide not only for inpatient care -- as do our existing State hospitals -- but as well it will contain a host of new features.

It will have facilities for outpatients so that persons in the early stages of mental illness can continue to live at home with their families while undergoing treatment. It will have special units for the old and the young - for geriatric patients and for emotionally disturbed children. Ultimately it will provide for badly needed research in the causes and cures of mental illness. And it will serve as a living classroom for the training of psychiatrists, psychiatrist aides, nurses, sociologists and the host of other professionals needed to staff our growing system of community centers.

Yes, this institute is a new breed of cat in Florida, one of the first of its kind in the Nation. It is a manifestation of Florida's bold new approach to the treatment of mental illness . . . an approach whereby we concentrate our efforts on treating persons in the early stages of mental illness on an outpatient basis . . . of caring for them in their home communities so they can live with their families and sometimes even continue in their jobs . . . instead of sending them to some remote asylum.

In other words, we are bringing mental health services to the urban areas -- where the people are!

Those of us connected with the State Division of Mental Health have great plans for this new institute in Tampa. And I'd like to share briefly with you these plans so you can better understand why we all are so excited about it.

There are three phases of construction in our master plan. The first phase will include some 250 to 300 beds for full-time psychiatric care. It will include small units offering specialized treatment for geriatric patients and adolescents. And it will have facilities for outpatient treatment and daycare programs. Of course, the initial construction will include the necessary therapy rooms, vocational rehabilitation facilities, offices and equipment necessary in any intensive treatment center of this kind.

The second phase of construction will provide a multi-story building which will include facilities for research into the various aspects of mental illness. And it will contain facilities for the training of professionals in the field of mental health -- psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, nurses and nurses aides, sociologists and social workers.

We anticipate that this training program will be closely associated with the new medical school at the University of South Florida. We would like to see this institute become the teaching hospital for the medical school. Thus, the medical college would provide the instructional service for the students . . . the mental health institute would be the classroom for on-the-job training. Such a partnership would save considerable money because it would prevent duplication of construction at the medical college.

And let me interject at this point that this is one very good reason that your State Cabinet and the Division of Mental Health are so enthusiastically joining your legislative delegation in pushing for the earliest possible construction of a medical school at the University of South Florida. Not only will the medical college play an important role in the Mental Health Institute . . . but, as well, it will play an important role in the State's entire mental health program by training the professionals so badly needed in our community hospital program.

Let me repeat: We must have a medical school at the University of South Florida and it must be completed at the earliest possible time!

The third phase of construction is scheduled to take place after the University of South Florida medical school is in operation and has established a residency in child psychiatry. This phase will provide special facilities for the care of psychotic or emotionally disturbed children. And it will include-outpatient and daycare programs for these children. So you can see that we have great plans for this new mental health institute.

We have great plans to make this facility one of the leading weapons in our growing war against mental illness . . . still by far our number one health problem.

The first phase will cost an estimated three and a half million dollars. Ultimately, the completed center will cost in the neighborhood of 16 million dollars.

And it will be one of the wisest expenditures we have ever made in Florida's mental health program.

I am pleased to report at this time that all systems are in the early construction of the first phase of this institute. We have just received word from our engineers that the soil-boring reports on the proposed site are favorable to construction. As you know, we had been concerned about the possibility of underground faults which would have precluded construction on this site.

I am also pleased to report that the architects for the institute -- who are here with us today -- have begun preliminary planning on the hospital. And before this biennium is over, we expect to have the actual construction well underway. At this point, let me emphasize one thing to those of you involved in community mental health programs in Hillsborough and the adjoining counties:

This new institute will in no way conflict with the State funding for community mental health centers. These local centers must and will remain the focal point of Florida's mental health program . . . the first line of attack in the war on mental illness.

The State Division of Mental Health is firmly committed to this concept. And perhaps the best way to prove this commitment is the fact that since 1965, financial support for our community has increased threefold . . . that three new community centers have been completed recently . . . and that nine new centers are authorized and will be completed before the end of the biennium.

.In closing, let me make this final observation. The dream we are dreaming today . . . the completion of this magnificent center . . . won't come easy. It won't just happen because we have drawn up an ambitious master plan. To turn this reality poses a challenge to all of us.

For some reason, which is beyond my comprehension, it seems to be harder for us to get dollars appropriated for mental health purposes than just about any other type of program in State government . . . *despite* the fact that it is our number one health problem . . . *despite* the fact that an estimated one person in eight will suffer some form of mental illness in his lifetime.

This means that all of us here . . . in fact, all of us in Florida who are concerned with the scourge of mental illness . . . are going to have to pull together to support the development of this new regional center . . . and, for that matter, to join together in support of our State mental health program in all its aspects.

We have an auspicious beginning for this new center . . . the beginning of greatness. Adding to its potential on the one hand will be the new University of South Florida Medical School with its teaching and research facilities . . . and, soon to be built on an adjacent tract, will be the large new Veterans Hospital, consisting of a high percentage of beds for psychiatric patients . . . and finally, the magnificent new general hospital which has just been completed here.

And so I am convinced that if we persevere, if we pull together in support of this institute, we will soon see established here, adjacent to this campus, one of the finest and most comprehensive mental health complexes in the entire Nation. This is our goal. This we intend to achieve.