

Nursing Home Closed

'Dangerous to Life': City

BY WILLIAM JONES AND PAMELA ZEKMAN

Dr. Murray Brown, city health commissioner, yesterday ordered a South Side nursing home closed and directed the owners to immediately begin transferring an estimated 81 patients to other homes.

Brown described the administration of the Park House, 2320 S. Lawndale Av., as "dangerous to life" and said the staff was "disorganized and demoralized."

Brown acted after a Health Department physician, a registered nurse and the city's nursing supervisor made a complete investigation of the home yesterday and discovered numerous examples of patient neglect and filth.

The nursing home is one of nearly 20 exposed as substandard by TRIBUNE Task Force reporters working in cooperation with the Better Government Association.

"The staff at the home just didn't know what to do with the patients," said Brown. "There was no one there who was able to direct the staff or supervise them in giving care."

He said his staff reported that one old man had to apply ointment to a leg injury himself and then use an old dressing to cover the wound. Brown said dirty mops and other cleaning equipment were stored in the same cabinet with food. He said there was no evidence that the patients had been provided with



Dr. Brown



(TRIBUNE Staff photo; By Leonard Bartholomew)

Three members of board of health inspection team leave Park House Nursing Home, 2320 S. Lawndale, one of several homes Tribune investigators found to have substandard conditions.

Nursing Home Ordered Closed; City Warns 7 on '71 Licenses

(Continued from first page)

soap or towels in a bathroom area.

Brown said he now fears that if the Health Department is forced to close other nursing homes it will result in a critical shortage of shelter and beds.

"I seriously considered putting a public health nurse in the Park House and attempt to organize the staff," said Brown. "But I concluded that the problems could not be corrected in a day or two. I am very concerned about the same thing in other nursing homes where the staffs may be leaving. I am concerned that we won't have enough beds for these people."

Not Yet Inspected

Park House also was one of seven nursing homes charged yesterday with failing to have 1971 city licenses as the crack-down against nursing homes by city, county and state agencies widened.

Nick Camillo, an investigator for the city collector's office which is issuing citations for

the license violations, said the failure means the nursing homes have not been inspected by Chicago's Health, Fire and Building departments.

The owners of the homes cited must appear in court March 25. If they do not obtain licenses and pass city inspections they then will be ordered closed.

In other developments, Dr. John B. Hall, director of the county Health Department, said he will decide by Tuesday what action will be taken against eight other nursing homes that Hall accused of "backsliding" in patient care in recent months. Hall said six of the eight have been named in the TRIBUNE series.

May Seek Aid

"If we feel these homes are unfit for human habitation we will seek legal aid from state's attorney's office in closing them down," said Hall. He said the county cannot revoke a state-issued nursing home license, but that his office can close a home it considers to be a health hazard.

Dr. Roger F. Sondag, chief of the chronic illness division of the state Health Department, said 12 two-man teams of state inspectors will be in Chicago by next week to investigate nursing home conditions.

Sondag said he has assigned registered nurses and sanitation experts to the teams.

Other Homes Cited

Other homes cited yesterday by license investigators were the Beatrice Brown Nursing Home, 3501 W. Monroe St., Patterson Convalescent Home, 3242 Maypole Av., Garfield Nursing Home, 3834 W. Washington Blvd.; Boulevard Nursing Home, 4533 W. Washington Blvd.; Austin-Congress Nursing Home, 901 S. Austin Blvd.; and the Hadley Nursing Home, 3205 W. Douglas Blvd.

Bonnie Esposito, a staff member of the Little Brothers of the Poor, 1658 W. Belmont Av., said her office is accepting offers of clothing and volunteer services from people who want to help nursing home patients. She asked that volunteers come to the office or call 528-5588.