

Court Action Sought Against Rest Homes

BY WILLIAM JONES AND PAMELA ZEKMAN

The city Public Health Department called for court action against nine Chicago nursing homes yesterday on charges ranging from unsanitary living conditions to staff shortages, lack of heat and patient neglect.

In one of the homes cited, health inspectors reported several wheelchair patients begged for help in getting to their beds and claimed their pleas for help had been ignored for hours by several nurse's aides chatting only a few feet away.

Dr. Murray Brown, city health commissioner, said the charges have been turned over to Richard Currie, city corporation counsel, with a request that the nursing homes be sued immediately to correct dozens of health code violations.

Two Previously Closed

Eight of the nine homes were exposed in a week-long series compiled by TRIBUNE Task Force reporters working in cooperation with the Better Government Association. Two of the homes were previously ordered closed by the city because they posed an immediate danger to the health and safety of patients, according to Dr. Brown.

They are the North Shore

Rest Haven, 7428 N. Rogers Av., and the Park House Nursing Home, Inc., 2320 S. Lawndale Av.

Vows Improvements

The other homes in which court action was requested are Approved Home, Inc., 909 W. Wilson Av., Austin-Congress Nursing Home, 901 S. Austin Blvd.; Birchwood Pavilion Inc., 7464 N. Sheridan Rd.; Beacon Hill Nursing Home, 4530 N. Beacon St.; Melbourne Nursing Center, 4621 N. Racine Av.; Kenmore House Nursing Home, 5517 N. Kenmore Av.; and the Belmont Rest Home, Inc., 1936 W. Belmont Av.

"We are determined to make these homes upgrade conditions," said Dr. Brown. "This is apparently the only way to get conformance. In those cases that we can't prove there is an immediate danger to health and safety, this is the route we have to take. If necessary, we will file suits against them every day. We have every expectation that the courts will support us on this matter."

Nursing home owners and administrators can be fined up to \$200 for each violation and

[Continued on page 5, col. 3]

Weather

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 1971

CHICAGO AND VICINITY:

Partly cloudy today; high, 30 to 35; low, around 20; north-westerly winds 15 to 25 m. p. h. Tomorrow: Fair; high, middle to upper 30s. Map and other reports on page 14.

Ask Court Action on Rest Homes

[Continued from first page]

be sentenced to six months in jail.

At Approved Home, the city uncovered inadequate staff and poor building maintenance. Health inspectors reported that when they entered the building Feb. 24, the only person on duty was a switchboard operator who said she was substituting for staff members who did not show up for work.

Inspectors also reported exposed electrical wiring strung across patients' rooms, cleaning equipment, and janitorial supplies stored in living areas, broken furniture and an elevator breakdown.

Jacob Farkas, administrator of Approved Home, had earlier denied complaints from one of his staff members that the linen room was overrun with rats and cockroaches. The statement was made in the presence of a TRIBUNE reporter who worked in the home as a maintenance man.

At the Melbourne Nursing Center, inspectors reported broken windows, peeling paint, and the stench of urine in bathing areas. They also found stopped-up toilets, exposed wiring and a heating system that is not capable of providing a temperature of 75 degrees thruout the home. Melbourne is owned by Daniel Slader, treasurer of the Metropolitan Chicago Nursing Home Association.

At the Austin-Congress Home, health inspectors reported that patients confined to wheel chairs begged them for help in getting to their beds and said they had been ignored for hours by nurse's aides who stood chatting only a few feet away.

At the Belmont Rest Home, inspectors reported soiled mattresses, dirty and stained floors and inadequate personnel to care for the 55 patients.

Birchwood Pavilion is charged with failing to provide proper medical care and inspectors said three of the patients have not seen a doctor for more than three months, according to the home's medical charts.