

Nursing Home:

'A Lousy, Horrible Place'

BY WILLIAM JONES
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Dr. Franklin Yoder, Illinois director of public health, made a surprise inspection of several Chicago nursing homes yesterday and described one of the homes as a "horrible, lousy place."

The state's top health official also announced that state health inspectors will be permanently assigned to Chicago within a week for the first time.

"We are no longer going to take the city's word for everything," said Yoder. "We are not going to discredit the city's inspections, but their reports on nursing home conditions will only be part of our expanded program."

Gave License Automatically

The state automatically has licensed Chicago nursing homes approved by city health inspectors. Yoder said rubber-stamping based on city inspections would end after inspectors from his 1,100-member staff in Springfield are assigned to Chicago. He suggested his office may seek "complete control" over nursing home operations in Illinois.

The homes visited yesterday by Yoder and his aides were the Mount Pisgah Nursing Home, 4220 S. Champlain Av.; Dearborn House, 2400 S. Dearborn St.; and Douglas Park Nursing Home, 1518 S. Albany Av.

Dozens of Cans

Workmen at Mount Pisgah were in the midst of replastering and repainting when Yoder and Russell Bryant, administrator of long term care for the state agency, entered the building. A nurse said the owners began the redecorating job over the weekend.

Sinks had been pulled from the wall and dozens of paint cans were found thruout the home. Plumbers were installing new pipes and plastering was under way in many rooms.

In rooms where work had not yet begun, the old paint hung

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(Tribune Staff Photo; By William Yates)

Dr. Franklin Yoder, state public health director, with patients during surprise visit to Douglas Park Nursing Home, 1518 S. Albany Av. On the Douglas Park Home, Dr. Yoder said: "Patients seem to be pretty well cared for."

State Aide Visits City Nursing Homes, Calls One Lousy Place

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in strips from the walls and ceilings.

"This is a horrible building," said Yoder. "It's a lousy place. They're starting to do something about it and I suspect it's a result of THE TRIBUNE's articles."

"Good Evidence"

Yoder said that since the Task Force reports of patient neglect and abuse in some private nursing homes began appearing Sunday, his office has received a "barrage of complaints" from relatives of nursing home patients. The six-week investigation was conducted in cooperation with the Better Government Association.

Bryant opened a drawer in

one patient's room and found a box of prescription pills on which the typewritten name of one patient had been scratched out and another's written below it.

"Are you switching pills for the patients?" Bryant asked a licensed practical nurse. The nurse denied such practices existed in the home.

"When you scratch a name and put another one in, that's real good evidence you're switching medicine and that's absolutely forbidden," Bryant said.

At the Douglas Park Home, the administrator ordered reporters and photographers to leave before she would permit Yoder and Bryant to inspect the home. Yoder emerged about 30 minutes later and said he

observed the staff serving the noon meal and thought the food was excellent.

He said he noticed minor housekeeping violations, but concluded the "patients seem to be pretty well cared for."

Yoder described the Dearborn House as a good example of how "a little money and effort" can provide good patient care. He said "care shows" all over this place." The home houses 126 patients.

In a related development in Washington, Rep. David Pryor (D., Ark.), an outspoken critic of nursing home operations and the sponsor of a bill to create a committee on aging in the House, said he hopes the disclosures by THE TRIBUNE will prompt similar probes in other large cities.