

NEED IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

It has been determined by Congress many times in the past by special legislation with respect to the expansion, construction, or reconstruction of specific hospitals and medical facilities that there are needs in the District over and above those being met by the various hospital and medical facilities construction Acts, which are applicable to all the States and the District of Columbia.

GENERAL HOSPITAL AND NURSING HOME BEDS

In the District of Columbia there is now a total of 4957 general hospital beds in existence or approved for construction.¹ In accordance with the statistical report for the year ended June 30, 1967 of the Health Facilities Planning Council for Metropolitan Washington, these hospital beds have an annual utilization rate of 84.7 percent compared with a national average of 76.5 percent. This means that on a given day of the year, an average of 4199 beds are being utilized and of these it is estimated that 40 percent or 1680 beds are being used by residents of the surrounding counties, leaving 2519 beds for use by District residents. Furthermore, the average length of stay of a patient in any one of these beds is 8.1 days. Also, for the year 1965² the occupancy rates of these beds per thousand Metropolitan Washington Area residents was as follows:

District of Columbia.....	1886
Maryland	477
Virginia	565

Comparison of the above utilization data with that of the United States indicates that the beds in the District are being over-utilized. This fact, plus the existing critical shortage of skilled nursing home beds in the District, is now and will continue to be a serious obstacle in meeting the demands for beds under the Medicare and Medicaid provisions of the Social Security Act. Excessive occupancy of acute hospitals beds must continue until such time as sufficient nursing home beds become available. Estimates of this additional need in the District range upward from 600. At present, we have in the District 2490 beds in 26 licensed nursing homes which are being occupied for all practical purposes close to 100 percent throughout the year.³

OTHER RELATED HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Besides the known need for hospital and nursing home beds, annual surveys made by the D.C. Department of Public Health for the preparation of long range hospital and medical facilities construction plans under the provisions of the Hill-Harris Act (formerly Hill-Burton)

¹ *Hospital and Medical Facilities Construction Plan*, 1968 Revision, D.C. Department of Public Health.

² *Ibid.*

³ *1966 Survey of Extended Care Facilities*, D.C. Department of Public Health.