

Mr. CAPSON. I think the staffing problem in nursing personnel is still a problem all around the United States. Some areas have a little bit more than others, and other hospitals will have a little less of something else. It is still quite a problem. The hospital you are talking about is in West Roxbury; I understand that the quadraplegics would take turns, getting up on alternate days. That is how bad it was. They did get some additional money and help but we still have extreme problems.

I just visited the Hines Center in Chicago before I came to the committee meeting and they are having GU technician problems. They also need urologists very badly in that center. The problems of staffing are still quite outstanding.

Mrs. HECKLER. We shall certainly look into this because it is a very important area. We all feel a great deal of concern, and certainly the veteran today coming back from Vietnam deserves the same caliber of treatment his predecessors in the service have received. There is no excuse for not keeping up this level.

Mr. HALEY. The gentleman from Minnesota seeks recognition?

Mr. ZWACH. No questions.

Mr. HALEY. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

I am sure that you feel and know that you have a sympathetic committee here to consider this and we are very happy that you were with us this morning.

Mr. CAPSON. Mr. Chairman, I have Mr. Donald Broderick from the Bronx VA Hospital here. He would, with your permission, like to state a few words about the conditions of that hospital.

Mr. HALEY. Mr. President, I don't think we have quite the time. If he wants to file his statement, we will be glad to receive it for the record. We are trying to get to the last witness. You know time is short. If he will submit the statement for the record, we will be glad to insert it in the record as if given.

Mr. CAPSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(The statement follows:)

STATEMENT OF MR. DONALD BRODERICK, EASTERN PARALYZED VETERANS ASSOCIATION

The Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association is an organization formed by and for the most seriously disabled in the world. It is devoting its life and effort to every problem of each paraplegic regardless of race, creed or color.

To the average able-bodied person, a person in a wheelchair cannot walk. Unfortunate, but nothing more. But, in actual fact, his inability to walk is the least of a paraplegic's problems. The damage to his spinal cord can be compared to that of an electric wire—he has been "shorted out" below the level of damage and the resulting conditions are what makes his care and treatment so difficult and so specialized. The loss of sensation he has suffered makes him unaware that anything wrong is taking place within his body. And, if allowed to go unattended, can cause long periods of hospitalization and, oftentimes, can even prove fatal. The loss of control of his internal functions makes him vulnerable to kidney infection, disease and stones; bed sores, respiratory problems and innumerable other complexities, with equal adversities. Ask a paraplegic how such a disability feels and he will tell you that the feeling is akin to not having a body at all; except when he is in pain, tho' he cannot tell its origin.

The V.A. has long recognized the uniqueness of this catastrophic disability. Centers were created for specialized care and rehabilitation. We were the world's leader in this field. But now we find a general deterioration in care due to a number of reasons, which places us far behind our initial leadership position. The cutbacks in personnel that the V.A. witnessed beginning July last were calamitous. Already understaffed facilities were forced to chop further while the number of veterans treated grew. As anyone can see, these two facts cannot possibly add up to adequate care.