



The opening of this Center today in no way minimizes the work of the solitary research scientist working alone. It will aid him and the forces of research scattered across the country.

This Center will provide a focal point for all who inquire -- for all who seek sources of life and the causes of death.

This is a practical step, taken by our Government as trustee for the people, toward the three-fold goal of improving the health, education, and welfare of our citizens. It will better public health by hastening the conquest of disease; it will widen the bases and the horizons of medical education, and in both these ways it will contribute to the general welfare of the Nation.

The purpose of the Center -- to facilitate and improve medical research -- is part of a research program which has gained spectacular impetus in this country since the end of World War II. We are now carrying on in the United States the most intensive and widespread research attack on human disease which the world has ever seen. It is a collaborative effort -- a close partnership between the Federal Government and the medical, research and related professions, universities and medical schools, and numerous Nation-wide organizations of citizens. Every year the effort widens, as new and old organizations concentrate on specific killers of mankind.

The part played by the Federal Government in this intensive research program is an important one. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare now supports seven research institutes, all of them located here at Bethesda. In addition, half of all research in medical schools is now financed by Federal grants. In 1953 these research grants and related training activities totaled 22 and a half million dollars. This investment has contributed dividends to the kind of medical knowledge which, since 1900, has helped to lengthen our national life span by about 20 years and has taught us how to control or eliminate diseases which once were national scourges.

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For example, it was a Public Health Service doctor who discovered that pellagra was a dietary deficiency disease, thus leading to its final conquest. Here, in these Federal Research Institutes, Rocky Mountain spotted fever was identified and a vaccine against it discovered. Here were made the first discoveries about Q fever, and here the carrier of typhus fever was found, a knowledge which has saved the lives of countless numbers of our troops abroad.

The Clinical Center which we are dedicating today is a milestone -- a very big milestone, as you can see -- on this road of progress. It is a tool of steel and stone to be used in improving and testing the results of medical research by relating those results directly to patients suffering from the diseases under investigation. By this joining, under one roof, of hospital, clinic, and research laboratories, the research scientists are acquiring a new and powerful tool in their endless struggle to unlock the stubborn secrets of disease and build a better life for all of us.

✓ The need for uniting clinical studies more closely with laboratory research was first voiced by the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service as long ago as 1911. In his report of that year he said: "The time has now come when in order to obtain the best results from laboratory work there should be available a hospital attached to the laboratories to which patients suffering from a particular disease which it is desired to study could be admitted, so that the cases could be studied throughout all the stages of the disease."

He had the vision, but it has taken forty-two years for that vision to materialize into this reality. In 1946 the National Advisory Cancer Council recommended a clinical center for the more effective study of cancer, and shortly thereafter the Mental Health Council made a similar suggestion concerning mental disease. The need, however, was for a more inclusive center, and in 1947 a recommendation pointed up the need and gave powerful impetus to the plans which finally led to the Center's construction.

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This recommendation said, in part: "Further advances in the prevention as well as the treatment of many chronic diseases are dependent on research. Although a good deal of research is now being carried on in chronic disease, only a fraction of the total need is being met.

"War experience in medical research has made it clear that we must broaden our vision and think in terms of research planned and organized on a much larger scale than any now contemplated... The greatest emphasis must be placed on those diseases which are the most important causes of death and disability..."

Initial funds for building a Clinical Center were finally authorized and first money appropriated in 1947 by the 80th Congress, and you see the result here today. It is not only a symbol of man's untiring search for knowledge and a better life. It is a monument of what can be accomplished when there is unity of purpose and free cooperation toward a worth-while goal.

For the Clinical Center is in no sense a partisan, politically inspired enterprise. Though funds for its construction were voted by a Republican Congress, the vote was on a non-partisan basis, with both Republicans and Democrats supporting it.

The late beloved Congressman Frank B. Keefe, of Wisconsin, was its principal champion in the House, and his success in winning non-partisan backing was shown when the measure passed without a single dissenting vote.

In the upper house, Senators Styles Bridges, of New Hampshire, and William F. Knowland, of California, were among its skillful and successful backers. There, too, it won support from both parties.

The reason for this non-partisan approach toward the Clinical Center and toward similar measures to improve the Nation's health is not hard to find. For the Center is an instrument in the unceasing search of science for truth, and scientific truth knows no politics -- at least not in a free society such as ours.

As you can see, the building itself is a unique structure. Built in the shape of a Lorraine cross, it is really a set of laboratories wrapped around a 500-bed hospital. We are at the center, and the hospital is just above us. Back of us are clinical laboratories. On each side are basic science laboratories. No more dramatic revelation of the complexity of modern medicine could be devised than the fact that a structure as large and complicated as this is necessary to bring together all the trained doctors and scientists needed for a full-scale attack on the diseases which are being studied here. This Center will house the widest array of specialists and technicians that has ever, in the history of mankind, been assembled for work in pure and applied science.

The building has been designed to have the utility and flexibility necessary to meet the ever-changing requirements of laboratory research, patient-care, and sound administrative practices. The achievement will come from the intimate relationship between the laboratories on the one side and the hospitals and clinics on the other. Research will be devoted primarily to those chronic diseases which are today our Nation's major medical problems — cancer, heart disease, mental illness, and neurological and metabolic disorders.

Patients who come here will have medical care as good as any in the world. The most advanced research techniques will probe into the causes and attempt to find ways of curing and preventing the diseases from which they suffer.

This will be far more than simply another Federal hospital. All its patients will be referred by medical sources and chosen on the basis of the relation of their disease to problems currently under study at the Center. They may remain in the hospital for long periods of time, and after they are discharged, they will be observed closely for periods ranging from a few months to ten years or more. Their welfare will at all times be the first consideration.

Teaching hospitals and specialists in the various chronic diseases will not only refer their patients here for study, but through consultation, follow-up,

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and observation will actively take part in the studies being carried on. The laboratories and patient areas will also be open to distinguished visiting scientists from the universities and medical schools. Thus the Clinical Center will be a truly national institution -- an invaluable asset which will enrich the resources of our universities and medical schools and a laboratory where scientists from other countries can pursue their studies, thus widening not only their own knowledge but ours.

But this Clinical Center's meaning, it seems to me, goes deeper than that. It is a logical outcome of the original concept of this country held by the men who founded it.

They used powerful phrases to express their concept -- phrases which are as strong and vigorous today as when first written a century and three quarters ago.

From the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Will not this center strengthen human hold on life and make easier the pursuit of happiness?

From the Constitution, "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, . . ."

What single institution could be expected to do more for the general welfare or to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity?

This Center is the way responsible government -- as trustee for the people -- fulfills its obligation placed upon it by the Constitution.

It is new evidence that the American Government continues to be responsive to the people and to the needs of the people.

I proudly dedicate this center to medical research as a symbol of our national concern for the health of our people, for their right to pursue happiness unhampered by crippling pain and illness.

In freedom, this building and the people who work here are dedicated to the endless struggle against human suffering.

We are dedicating it today. Dedicating it to the open mind of research -- dedicating it as an example of democracy heeding its obligation to the free men who are together self-governing.