Lafayette Mental Health Center Planned for 1973

A unit to serve 5 Parishes, 25,000 Annually

LAFAYETTE, La. — A $1 million community mental health center directed by Lafayette psychiatrist Dr. David J. Rees will be established here by January of 1973, according to the project's chairman Mrs. Jewell Lowe.

The Acadiana Mental Health Center, funded jointly by the state and federal government, will result from a merging of the city's adult mental health unit with its guidance facility for children.

The new center will treat a five-parish area and is expected to serve 25,000 people annually housed in the old Tuberculosis Annex which is to be completely renovated, the facility will include a staff of 25 and will be served by nine local psychiatrists and physicians on a part-time basis.

A 12-bed unit will enable the treatment of complex cases from both inpatients and outpatients. The center will be staffed by individuals familiar with the treatment of substance abuse in both the United States and the state of Louisiana.

Rees said the center will be the first of its kind in New Orleans, was named to head the mental health center in the United States by a 24-member board of directors. The board, chaired by Mrs. Lowe, will be responsible for the center's operation.

He said special goals of the center will be to increase the number of patients treated per year and to improve the efficiency of services by increasing personnel.

Dramatic Problem

"There is a tendency to overlook running a mental health center in the United States by a 24-member board of directors. The board, chaired by Mrs. Lowe, will be responsible for the center's operation."

"Drug abuse is a dramatic problem, but the community should realize that for each drug patient we see, we treat 20 psychiatric and neurotic cases from both inpatient and outpatients. The center will be staffed by individuals familiar with the treatment of substance abuse in both the United States and the state of Louisiana."

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