

JAMES DECKER MUNSON HOSPITAL

1915-1948

The community of Traverse City was without a general hospital until 1915 when the late Dr. James Decker Munson, Superintendent of the Traverse City State Hospital, was instrumental in creating a General Hospital Division of the State Hospital by Act. No. 33, Public Acts of 1915. An old building on the State Hospital grounds was set up with a bed capacity of 22. This served as the general hospital for this region until 1925.

Certain profits accrued from the operation and, with this money as a nucleus, a new structure was built at the present site on the north end of the State property. Additional funds were advanced from the General Fund, with a total expenditure of approximately \$250,000. The building was complete in 1925 with a capacity of 55 beds. It was named the James Decker Munson Hospital, although legally it was still the General Hospital Division of the State Hospital. Funds advanced from the General Fund as a loan were later cancelled by the Governor and Administrative Board.

Soon after the opening of the hospital, the Hannah-Lay-Morgan interests built a convalescent pavilion on the north end of Munson Hospital. In 1935, the Children's Fund of Michigan asked permission to erect a Clinic adjacent to the Munson Hospital. With the aid of a Legislative Act. No. 39 of 1935, ground was leased and the Clinic building completed in 1936. This Clinic was built to care for pediatric problems and is affiliated with the Pediatrics Department of the University of Michigan Medical School. It is under the control of the Children's Fund of Michigan until May 1, 1954, at which time the lease expires. There are 19 beds on the third floor of the Clinic building which are operated by the Munson Hospital.

With the establishment of the Central Michigan Children's Clinic, it was a natural sequence that facilities be made available for the care of crippled children. In 1938, the Hannah-Lay-Morgan Pavilion was converted into wards, with the addition of about 30 beds, largely for the use of the Orthopedic Department of the Munson Hospital. At the same time it was necessary to establish a complete physiotherapy department. The Kiwanis Club of Traverse City sponsored a therapeutic pool, donating \$4,800.00 for that purpose. The Munson Hospital added some \$5,000.00 from earnings to complete the Physiotherapy Department including a brace shop, equipment and materials. At about the same time, the X-Ray Department was enlarged and new diagnostic and therapeutic equipment purchased. With the establishment of these departments, unconditional approval of the hospital was obtained from the Michigan Crippled Children's Commission, the American College of Surgeons, as well as the Michigan and American Hospital Associations.

Utilities, such as steam, hot water, laundry, etc., were provided by the Traverse City State Hospital and charged to the Munson Hospital Fund. Some utilities, such as electricity, were purchased directly from the city of Traverse City. Other supplies were requisitioned and purchased through the Central Purchasing Department at Lansing.

During all of this time, the Munson Hospital was administered by the administrative staff of the State Hospital. As the number of admissions of bed patients increased, it became evident that some change in the Munson Hospital's status should be accomplished. After careful consideration of the problem by local citizens and the Michigan State Hospital Commission, special legislation was introduced and passed by Act. No. 129 of the 1945 State Legislature, separating the Munson Hospital from the Traverse City State Hospital. This separation became effective on April 27, 1945, making Munson Hospital a separate State institution under the direct supervision of the State Hospital Commission, with a Superintendent appointed by the Commission, and a local advisory board of seven.

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With the tremendous increase in use of hospital beds, Munson Hospital became over-crowded and had a long waiting list. It was evident to interested local citizens that an expansion was rapidly becoming necessary. Plans were made to raise funds for such an expansion and during the summer of 1946, pledges were made for \$540,000. to be paid over a period of five years. At the present writing, February 1949), approximately \$315,000.00 of this amount is held in cash or government bonds.

The local Advisory Board created more interest among the local people in the problems of the local hospital, and, for a number of reasons, it was felt that this unit should have more local control. Consequently, further legislation was deemed advisable. In 1947, authority was given by Act. 223 of the 1947 to the Department of Mental Health (formerly the State Hospital Commission) to lease the existing hospital, including all of its land, buildings, equipment, etc., for a term of fifty years to a non-profit corporation. Such a corporation was formed and the lease put into effect on January 1, 1948. The James Decker Munson Hospital Corporation consists of a Board of eleven members and a Hospital Membership of 100. The lease calls for an annual rental of one dollar. Plans are now under way to expand the existing facilities by the erection of a new wing, and alteration, in part, of the existing building.

In 1948, the Congress passed the Hill-Burton Act under which Act federal money is made available to the various States as grants-in-aid for the construction of new, or the expansion of existing hospital beds. There are certain rules and regulations set down by the Act governing the use of such funds. The Munson Hospital Board hopes to share in these federal funds and has made application for a grant which would make available fifty percent more than the amount raised locally. In order to qualify, it is necessary for the Board to have title to the property. Consequently, a request is now being made in the form of legislation which would transfer the title of the James Decker Munson Hospital, Inc., from the State to the existing Corporation

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