

## GROWTH AND THE MEDICAL CENTER

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Now that the last hurdles have been cleared and construction on Columbus Medical Center is about to begin, the attention of all concerned should be directed toward the solution of some of the hospital's problems.

It should be realized that the addition of 176 long-needed beds is still only a "catch up" measure. Columbus as a community, even with the new addition, will still lag behind such sister cities as Augusta, Macon and Savannah in its hospital bed-to-population ratio. Many more beds will be needed locally before any optimum ratio can be approached.

It should also be realized that the mere facts that new buildings will appear, that more facilities will be added, and that physical expansion and modernization will take place, do not ensure that the hospital as an institution will be a better one. It may become better. Growth, however, may just as easily compound, multiply and magnify the deficiencies that exist as smaller problems now. The present shortcomings are overlooked out of habit, and, because they have been lived with, they may not be so easy to ignore in the future.

There are problems now of administration, of admission policies, of nursing service and training, of hospital run departments, and of clinic organization; these are many and varied, and nearly all will need careful study. Aside from these, and intimately tied in with hospital recognition and accreditation, are the major problems of maintaining acceptable medical records and carrying on an effective and worthwhile intern and resident training program. These two matters relate directly to, and are primarily the responsibility of, all members of the active, attending medical staff. With an expanded hospital, these two problems will become greater. Many conscientious staff members who already devote much time and effort to committee work and teaching programs will continue to concern themselves in the future, but they cannot be expected to carry the burden alone or indefinitely. The coattail boys—who enjoy utilizing hospital facilities as attending staff members and relax while letting others worry about the responsibility of keeping the hospital accredited—contribute little to the hospital or the community.

If the new and expanded hospital is to live up to the high sounding, capitalized name of Medical Center, the staff should make sure that its standards improve along with the physical improvement.