

REMARKS BY GOVERNOR PIERRE S. DU PONT
BISSELL OPEN HOUSE JANUARY 5, 1983

I am very pleased to be here today to dedicate the newly renovated wing of the Emily P. Bissell Hospital.

Since the very early part of this century when the Delaware Anti-Tuberculosis Society was formed in Delaware and Emily P. Bissell conceived the idea of selling Christmas seals to raise funds to maintain a hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis, this hospital has played a vital role in providing health care for Delawareans.

The original hospital contained 18 beds and was located on the present Administration Building site. In 1925 the State legislature transferred the hospital, then called the Brandywine Sanatorium, to the Board of Health. The facilities were expanded over the years so that by 1940, with the addition of a second sanatorium, the hospital had a total capacity of 180 beds. In 1955 both buildings became known as the Emily P. Bissell Sanatorium and two years later, when services were expanded to include allied pulmonary diseases, the name was changed to Emily P. Bissell Hospital.

Although tuberculosis is not completely eradicated, the fight has been one of the most encouraging medical success stories of our times. The Banton Building was closed in 1967 due to the decrease in the number of tuberculosis cases and was renovated and completely refurbished in 1978 when it became a facility for intermediate care geriatric patients.

Today, the Emily P. Bissell Hospital still functions as a tuberculosis treatment center, but it has expanded its reach in the area of associated pulmonary and respiratory diseases. In response to changing needs, Bissell Hospital has also become an intermediate care facility for the chronically ill, and these patients are now the major part of its population. Still keeping up with the times, the hospital has recently opened a certified skilled care unit of 41 beds for Medicaid and Medicare patients.

We are proud of this hospital and its continuing accomplishments in serving the needs of Delawareans. I want to thank everyone for being here today to share in this happy occasion. I urge you to tour the facility if you have not already done so.

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