January 7, 1947

Honorable Herbert H. Lehman
820 Park Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Lehman:

A year's experience in the operation of the Bronx Veterans' Administration Hospital has convinced me that its value to veterans is seriously limited by lack of space for certain essential activities. The new medical program of the Veterans' Administration is being built upon the cooperation of the great medical centers of the country in the care of veteran patients. To attract and to retain this essential cooperation, the Veterans' Administration must encourage teaching and research, and must provide the necessary facilities for them.

I am sure it is not necessary for me to point out that a medical program of this kind not only assures the veteran of the finest medical care, but that it also offers educational opportunities in the field of medicine from which the entire community benefits. It is for this reason that I believe the community has a greater interest in the success of the program than one limited to the veteran alone.

None of the existing Veterans' Administration hospitals was designed for a program of this character; and all of them will have to be remodeled if the new program is to be completely successful. This is particularly true of the Bronx Veterans' Administration Hospital which was built many years ago and later acquired by the Veterans' Administration. Even the additions since made to the plant by the Veterans' Administration have not modernized it in this respect.

The present site of this hospital is already too crowded with buildings to permit of satisfactory modernization. Furthermore, under present conditions, two years would be required for the completion of new buildings and the situation is too urgent to justify so great a delay. After mature consideration of this problem, I am convinced that the only truly satisfactory solution lies in the acquisition by the Veterans' Administration, upon mutually acceptable terms, of the property of the Home for Hebrew Infants.

I realize that the desultory negotiations, which have been carried on for some months, have probably been unsatisfactory to the trustees of the Home for Hebrew Infants. That these negotiations have not been
Honorable Herbert H. Lehman

prosecuted more vigorously upon my part has been due to two considerations. First, I felt the obligation to convince myself of the necessity for investing the taxpayers' money in such a project; and, second, I had been informed that there was some reluctance upon the part of the trustees to dispose of this property.

Only a short time ago I told some interested parties, who were protesting our taking this property, that we would not take it. I shall not recede from this position so long as the trustees object to disposing of the property. I have set forth our need for the property, knowing of your wide interest in all that concerns the welfare both of the veteran and of the community of which he is a part, and of your special concern for all who are suffering from disabilities, with the request that you give this proposal your careful consideration.

Identical letters are being sent to:

Mr. Bernard M. Baruch
597 Madison Avenue
New York, New York

Mr. Henry S. Morgenthau, Jr.
285 Madison Avenue
New York, New York

Mr. Norman S. Goetz, President
Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York
11 Broadway
New York, New York

I understand that this is the group most interested in the Home for Hebrew Infants.

Will you please let me know your reaction to this proposal, advising me whether or not to reopen negotiations and, if so, in what manner? If this proposal is favorably considered I shall institute the necessary steps to obtain an appropriation from the Congress. I am sure you understand that conclusive action on my part in this matter is subject to the approval of the President and of the Congress.

Sincerely yours,

Omar N. Bradley
General, U. S. Army
Administrator