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Patients Challenge V.A. Hospital's Ban On Peace Petitions

A group called the Vietnam War Veterans Against the War, said yesterday that it would file a suit against administrators of a Veterans Administration Hospital here for allegedly forbidding patients from signing an antiwar petition.

David Jiminez, one of four veterans who circulated petitions Monday at the hospital at First Avenue and 23d Street, said that more than 150 signatures of veterans and some doctors and nurses had been collected. He said the petitions were destroyed after the hospital director, John V. Sheehan threatened to discharge patients who signed the petition.

Henry G. Campbell, the assistant director of the hospital, denied that any patients had been threatened with discharge but said that the hospital administrators had ordered those who were circulating petitions to "cease and desist" because it was "medically determined" that they were causing a disturbance.

He added that an antiwar poster was taken down because "this is a hospital not an art gallery."

In the hospital yesterday a number of young wounded veterans wore Vietnam War Veterans Against the War buttons and black arm bands with peace signs on them.

Three doctors, a nurse and 10 patients interviewed at the hospital said Mr. Sheehan had forbidden the signing of the petition.