

WXPost

Nixon Won't Enter Hospital For New Blood Clot in Leg

By Stuart Auerbach
Washington Post Staff Writer

Former President Nixon rejected his doctors' advice yesterday to go into a hospital for treatment of a new, painful and potentially dangerous blood clot in his upper left leg.

Dr. Walter Tkach, Mr. Nixon's White House physician and a close friend of the former President, flew from Washington to San Clemente yesterday to conduct the examination. In a statement to reporters later, he said:

"Serious consideration was given to hospitalization, but it has been ruled out at this time

based on former President Nixon's wishes."

As a result of the new clot, arising from a recurrence of phlebitis, Mr. Nixon's left leg "is swollen and painful," Tkach said.

The new clot is just above one that troubled Mr. Nixon last June, as he was about to start a nine-day visit to the Middle East. He rejected Tkach's recommendation that he cancel the trip, and followed it up with a state visit to the Middle East.

Tkach, an Air Force major general, said yesterday that the clot from the June attack is still present in Mr. Nixon's

lower left leg, attached to the wall of the vein and causes him "periodic pain."

Two doctors not connected with the case, upon learning of Mr. Nixon's condition, said they would hospitalize him immediately. But another specialist said he probably could be treated at home if there were no signs that a clot had moved to the lungs—where it could cause death.

Tkach and Dr. John Lundgren of Long Beach, Calif., who treated Mr. Nixon before he was elected President, said that the former President will continue to receive medi-

See NIXON, A6, Col. 1

NIXON, From A1

cation"—probably an anticoagulant drug—at his San Clemente home.

"He will be under doctors' care, and an evaluation will be made on a weekly basis by Dr. Lungren and myself," Tkach said.

He added that Mr. Nixon "is suffering from severe physical strain and physical fatigue, but he is mentally alert and has been working at his office or at home each day."

Mr. Nixon's son-in-law, David Eisenhower, told The Washington Post Thursday that the former President was bedridden at the Palm Springs estate of Walter Annenberg, the ambassador to Britain. Mr. and Mrs. Nixon left the Annenberg estate Thursday night for their San Clemente home.

A source close to Mr. Nixon in California said that the former President spent yesterday morning working at his desk in San Clemente while waiting for Tkach and Lungren to examine him.

Mr. Nixon first suffered from phlebitis, an inflammation of a vein, 15 years ago. Doctors aren't sure what causes phlebitis, or if the blood clot that almost always accompanies it arises from the inflammation or if the clot comes first. But they do know that people who have phlebitis once are likely to get it again.

If Mr. Nixon were to be hospitalized, he would probably go to the base hospital at the Camp Pendleton Marine Corps base near San Clemente. The hospital includes a special VIP area that Mr. Nixon can use and has special-

ists on its staff who could treat phlebitis.

Concerned over reports of Mr. Nixon's illness that came from members of his family, President Ford yesterday asked his White House physician, Dr. William Lukash, to keep him informed on the former President's health.

While some medical sources close to the case said they believe that Mr. Nixon's phlebitis is confined to superficial veins—those close to the skin—other doctors said the amount of swelling and the fact that the clot is located above the knee indicates that it is in deep veins below the muscles, which is considered more serious.

"Because there is so much edema [swelling]," said a Washington specialist who had been consulted by the White House on Mr. Nixon's previous phlebitis attack, "I have to conclude that it is in a deep vein."

"That's where you can get trouble."

The trouble would be when the clot—or a large piece of it—got loose in the vein and started moving through the larger vessels of the heart to the lung. If the clot is small, it could block a small vein and cause part of the lung to die.

A massive clot, however, could block the main artery between the lung and the heart and cause almost immediate death.

The blockage of a small vein in the lung would cause chest pains—something that Tkach did not report, indicating that Mr. Nixon has not suffered any lung damage.

Nevertheless, another expert said, phlebitis "is a silent

process until a clot gets critically located in the lung."

The main treatment is rest with the leg elevated. Anticoagulant drugs such as heparin and anti-inflammatory drugs such as butazolidin are used, and an elastic bandage on the leg to keep the swelling down. But there is some debate among doctors as to just when and for how long the drugs should be given.

Medical sources reported Thursday that Mr. Nixon had stopped taking his medicines and was refusing to wear the elastic bandage. He had also rejected the pleas of his family that he go to Eisenhower Memorial Hospital in Palm Springs, near the Annenberg estate.



Associated Press

Former President Nixon talks to sunbathers on the beach near Ventura, Calif., when he stopped to picnic with his daughter Tricia and son-in-law Edward Cox Aug. 14, five

days after his resignation. Student Dwight Brill of Muncie, Ind., camping in the area, took the photograph, a copy of which was just made available to the Associated Press.