

Doctors Say Mrs. Nixon Is Showing Improvement

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LONG BEACH, Calif., July 9 — Pat Nixon showed slight improvement today in her struggle to recover from a stroke that has left her with partial paralysis of her left side and a slight slurring of her speech.

Mrs. Nixon's condition was stable, the physicians attending her reported, but they remained concerned about her because of the uncertainties associated with a possible cerebral hemorrhage, which is suspected as the cause of her illness.

The Nixon family physician, Dr. John C. Lungren, described his patient, who is 64 years old, as being in "excellent" spirits and held out the hope that she could in time completely reverse the effects of the stroke.

"I would say we are in an area of seriousness probably for the next two or three days at least," Dr. Lungren responded when asked at a morning news conference if the stroke still imperiles the life of the wife of former President Richard M. Nixon.

Nixon Statement

The former President visited his wife today and later told reporters that he was confident Mrs. Nixon would completely recover.

"My wife is one who has been through a great many difficult experiences over many years, and one characteristic she has is self-reliance and strength of spirit," he said on his way out of Memorial Hospital Medical Center of Long Beach, where he was a patient nearly two years ago for surgery resulting from a phlebitis attack.

"Her spirit is great, and because her spirit is good she is going to see this thing through," Mr. Nixon asserted. "She is a fighter, she's not giving up, and for that reason, combined with the excellent care she is receiving from the doctors, she will have a complete recovery."

Mr. Nixon, who looked grim and withdrawn when entering the hospital wearing a dark business suit, described his own health as good. "I feel fine," he said, ending his first public interview with the press since he resigned the Presidency in 1974.

His daughters, Julie Nixon Eisenhower and Tricia Nixon Cox, also spent part of the day in the intensive care suite where their mother is being treated.

Dr. Lungren said that he and Dr. Jack M. Mjosier, a neurologist at the hospital where Mrs. Nixon was taken yesterday after becoming ill at her San Clemente home, believed that she had suffered a hemorrhage of the right cerebral cortex.

The possibility that a blood clot caused the stroke has not been ruled out, he explained, and he added that further tests would be needed to determine the exact nature of her problem. For the moment, however, the physicians were proceeding on the hemorrhage theory. They are requiring Mrs. Nixon to remain quietly in bed while the area of hemorrhage, be-

lieved to be in a branch of the right middle cerebral artery, heals.

Her blood pressure, which yesterday had elevated to an alarming 175/110, had been reduced today to "practically within normal limits," Dr. Lungren said.

"We hope she can return to complete normal activity and function," he continued, "but only time and observation are going to give us that answer."

Mrs. Nixon was apparently in good health before this illness, and was not taking prescribed medications of any kind, according to a hospital spokesman. Reports that she had suffered in the past from hypertension (high blood pressure) were incorrect, her doctors said.

No Checkup in 2 Years

Dr. Lungren indicated today that Mrs. Nixon, by nature, had sought very little medical attention and had not had a physical checkup in the nearly two years since the Nixons left the White House.

Since her last examination for hypertension came at the beginning of this period, the possibility that she developed some form of the condition in recent months could not be completely ruled out.

Dr. Lungren described the paralysis detected in Mrs. Nixon's left leg, arm and left side of the face as a "motor weakness" and loss of sensation. She is able to move these limbs to some extent and with a great degree of effort, he said, and can walk only with assistance.

"I think Mrs. Nixon is very amazing in the spirit she has taken," the doctor said. "Her attitude is very refreshing. Many patients are very despondent, they feel life is all over, they give up the fight. She's done none of this." The slurred speech, he reported, had neither improved nor deteriorated since her admission to the hospital.

No evidence of any abnormalities outside the stroke area have been discovered, he said.