

By CAROLE KEY

A&M soon will be able to boast one of the most up-to-date health facilities of any university around.

The idea of a new Student Health Center originated in January, 1970, says Howard S. Perry.

The talk phase began with committee meetings and discussions. A New Hospital Advisory Committee was made up of four students and four members of the university staff and faculty.

In the summer of 1970, the committee listed requirements and desired objectives. The university hired an architect to draw up the preliminary designs. These were approved by the Board of Directors.

The final plans were submitted and approved and the board authorized the committee to seek bids for the proposed center. A contract was awarded in February, 1972, to Thurmond and Vance, a local contractor currently doing some other construction on campus.

"Hopefully the center will be complete for the 1973 school year," Perry said.

It will be a two-story structure with a full basement. It is to be built where the remains of Mitchell Hall now stands.

Perry explained that the basement will contain space for the food service, the X-ray lab and a great deal of storage space.

The out-patient clinic will be located on the ground level floor, he continued. Here will be the admissions desk, the doctors' examining rooms, an eye, ear, nose and throat clinic, various labs, treatment rooms and an orthopedic lab.

The second floor will house the in-patient area. In-patient rooms, an acute room, an isolation ward and a mental health area are in the plans. Each of the 20 in-patient rooms will hold two per-

sons. The living quarters for the resident staff will also be on this floor.

Perry said the health center will have space available for seven doctors, although that number will not be hired for the first year. As the university grows and the need arises, staff additions will be made. "The plans are designed to serve an ultimate enrollment of 22,000 here at A&M," he added.

For the initial school year, there will be a director and an associate director. Counting the director, there will be four full-time staff positions, all medical doctors.

"Three M.D.'s are being employed and we have four or five applications for the other two positions," Perry said. He added that a couple of the applicants specialize, but no decisions have been made about hiring them.

The hospital will have space for an orthopedist, a psychiatrist, a gynecologist and an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist, but not all can be hired with the center just beginning.

Contract physicians from Bryan will also be employed part-time at the center.

At the present facility, all but the director are contract physicians Perry said that a gynecologist comes out to the hospital two days a week. Other specialists and a surgeon make routine calls each week and are on call as needed. A psychiatrist also is on call.

The new center will have registered nurses, licensed vocational nurses and nurses' aides. The current night duty staff consists of one registered nurse and a few nurses' aides, as well as an on-call physician. In comparison

the new center will probably have two registered nurses plus the aides on that shift. "However," Perry said, "this may depend on the patient number and the demand."

The new center will have its own cooks. Thus, special diets can be prepared on location.

The food will not be the pre-packaged frozen dinner type that some hospitals serve, Perry said.

"The new center will be one of the best of its kind around. It will not be a full-fledged hospital as such because major surgery will not be performed," he explained.

A&M now offers more health services without extra charge than do many other schools, Perry said. Part of the student service fee required of all students covers such services. Included are: medical and minor surgical care, in-patient care up to 10 days, unlimited consultations during clinic hours, lab services, routine X-rays, most medicines and 24-hour nursing and ambulance service. Most schools charge for labs, medications, X-rays and for patient rooms.

Perry said the current hospital services are good. "The trouble is that one does not hear about the good—just about those who feel they were mistreated," he remarked.

All students will be able to use the new center. The university staff and faculty will not use it except for some physicals which they will pay for and in emergencies.

"The Student Senate voted in the fall for a \$3.50 per semester building use fee to build the center. The money collected is to retire the bond indebtedness of the hospital, not to operate it," Perry pointed out.



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