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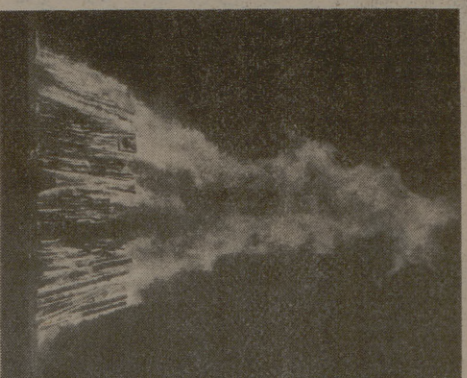
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Brazos County low in disease rate Consol has sharp immunization policy

By J. KARL JACKSON
Students of the A&M Consolidated Independent School District soon will be at least two steps ahead of the rest of the state in health care.
A sharp school immunization policy and a new health screening pilot program will help College Station youth stay healthy.

While cases of communicable diseases are on the rise statewide, cases reported in Brazos County have remained stable, said county health official Andi Wilson in a recent interview.

Texas Department of Health figures show a dramatic rise in reported cases of measles, rubella (German measles), and pertussis (whooping cough). School children are usually immunized with a combination diptheria-pertussis-tetanus vaccine and separate shots for polio, measles and rubella. "Many of the parents have become lax about having their children immunized," Wilson said, "and now the figures are climbing again."

Through Nov. 5 of this year, 1,975 cases of measles had been reported in the state. Only 227 cases were reported during the same period in 1976. Reported cases of rubella are rising with 754 cases last year, compared to 204 cases last year. Whooping cough is also hacking its way upward with 72 reported cases compared to 34 during the same time in 1976.

The reports show that Brazos

County does not reflect the statewide disease rise. "We're in pretty good shape here," Wilson said. "We had five cases of measles reported early in the year but after that we've had nothing."

Section 2.09 of the Texas Education Code requires that all children entering Texas elementary or secondary schools or institutions of higher education be immunized against diptheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis (polio), measles and rubella.

The law allows for provisional admittance of students when the required immunizations have begun and are continued "as rapidly as it is medically feasible. A full series of shots takes three to four months."

None of the 3,386 students in the district are to be admitted to public school unless they have had their shots.

However, exceptions are allowed on an individual basis for medical and religious conflicts.

"We've done real well here," said Suzie Feldman, school district head nurse. "Ninety six to 98 percent of our students are immunized."

State law has made the shots free of charge. They are available at the immunization clinic at the Brazos County Health Department.

The school district is in good condition to fight the rise of communicable diseases. A \$23,126 grant has been awarded by the Texas Education Agency for implementation of a health screening program for students in kindergarten, sixth grade and all newcomers.

The pilot program, which will go

into effect in late December, will provide a more complete physical evaluation of all students. It will include hearing, speech, vision, developmental and orthopedic screening, examination of lymph nodes, blood pressure, heart, lungs, hair, scalp, skin and teeth; and a check for anemia, a urine test and a neurological examination.

Feldman said that many of these tests were already being administered to the students. She said the program would offer a great opportunity to practice preventive medicine rather than having to resort to crisis care.

Major objectives of the program include a health assessment of each student, development of a record-keeping system, a referral system from the school to physicians in the area and a system of follow-up on the students from doctors to the school system.

"We're going to find out how feasible it is to do complete health assessments in a school setting," Feldman said. "This district is only

one of 10 to try out this program. The project will require the services of a full-time registered nurse and an aide. They will require attend a one-week training from the University of Texas School of Nursing. This will include depth training in physical assessment."

The grant is for two years and project will receive a final evaluation to determine specific procedures that may occur with statewide implementation.

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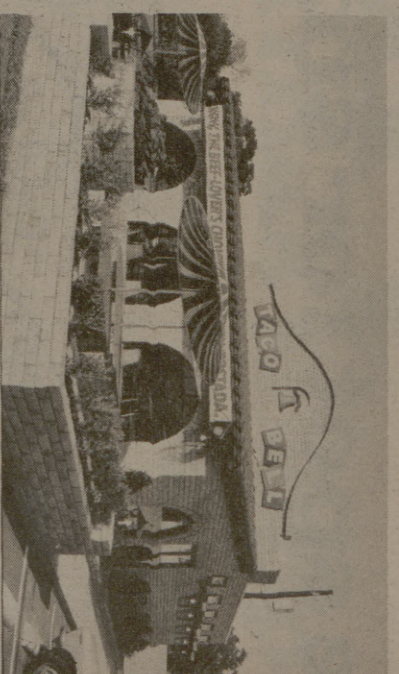
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