

A&M services limited

Gynecologic care

By FLAVIA KRONE

The first gynecologic health care program for women students at Texas A&M University was initiated in 1974 by Student Health Services Director, Dr. C. B. Goswick.

Before 1974, gynecologic health care was not available at Texas A&M University.

The program includes routine office gynecology, birth control prescription, pregnancy testing, and general disease screening.

Expansion of in-house laboratory facilities makes it possible for the health center to offer pelvic examinations, including papanicolaou (PAP) smears, and to diagnose and treat simple urinary, genital and vaginal infections.

These services are free to all women students at Texas A&M.

The health center also retains the services of a local gynecologist who will see students with more complex problems.

This service is free to women students when the appointment is arranged by Student Health Services.

Women students can also obtain a birth control prescription at the health center.

However, there is a catch. Although a health center physician will prescribe birth control, the health center pharmacy does not dispense contraceptives.

According to Goswick, the pharmacy stocks only those drugs that are used to treat acute, short-term illnesses.

Birth control pills do not fall in that category," Goswick said.

Expense and lack of space also prohibit the pharmacy from stocking oral contraceptives, he added.

This means that women who obtain a prescription for birth control pills from Student Health Services must have it filled at an off-campus pharmacy. The average price for a one-month supply of birth control pills in the Bryan-College Station area is \$3.

Because of this expense, the health center refers students seeking birth control to the Planned Parenthood Center at 301 N. Patricia, College Station.

Most students will qualify for free services at Planned Parenthood, said Sally Miller, a nurse practitioner at the center.

Students who do not qualify for free services are charged \$15, plus the cost of the birth control pills or device.

The Planned Parenthood Center offers a physical examination, PAP smear, venereal disease screening and a six months supply of birth control pills or other contraceptive device to students seeking conception control.

Miller said that the center will also screen for and try to treat simple vaginal infections. More complex problems are referred back to Student Health Services.

In addition to routine gynecology and birth control prescription, Student Health Services also offers pregnancy testing and venereal disease screening.

In the case of unwanted pregnancy, counseling is stressed. Personal counseling services on campus offers this type of counseling to University students.

The health center will not make specific referrals for abortion even at the woman's request, according to Goswick.

"That's just too much," he said. However, the health center will provide the student with a list of clinics which do handle unwanted pregnancies.

With many universities now offering complete gynecology clinics and the enrollment of women at Texas A&M approaching 10,000, the Student Health Services has no immediate plans to expand gynecologic health care here.

According to Assistant Director of Student Affairs, Toby Rives, Texas A&M women are "lucky" to have the services now available.

The major obstacle blocking the expansion of a health care program for women is understaffing, Rives said.

Goswick agreed with Rives. "We are definitely understaffed," he said.

Nationally, most universities have about one doctor for every 2,000 students. At Texas A&M the ratio is about one doctor for every 4,500 students, according to Goswick.

"We are so busy seeing sick people that we don't have time, unfortunately, to practice preventive medicine," he said.

Goswick added that there is a "distinct possibility" for a gynecology clinic at Texas A&M sometime in the future.

Gynecology important to women, says book

How important is a gynecologist to most women?

According to Thomas H. Green, Jr., M.D., associate clinical professor of gynecology at Harvard Medical School, gynecologists serve not only as specialist-consultants but also as primary care physicians for the majority of women in the United States.

In his book, "Gynecology, Essentials of Clinical Practice," Green states that "at least 25 percent of all malignant disease in women arises in the genital tract."

Furthermore, Green says that female genital cancer is easy to detect during a routine examination and PAP smear. If discovered early, the "cure rates are potentially the highest of any area of the body," Green says.

Aralyn H. Cepeda, administrator of The Ladies Center in Austin, estimates that 80 percent of all disease in women is gynecologically related.

Cepeda recommends that women over 18 have an annual medical examination and PAP smear.

Besides early detection of cervical cancer, a complete examination can reveal other disorders of the pelvis, breasts and thyroid glands, according to Cepeda.

Sexually active women should also be screened for venereal disease.

"Gonorrhea is more common than the common cold," Cepeda says.

The problem is compounded for women because they often cannot tell whether or not they have the disease, according to Cepeda.

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Political talks planned

By ANDY WILLIAMS

Three of Texas A&M's largest political organizations are planning strategies and programs for the spring, mainly aiming at the two major party primaries scheduled for the first week of May.

George Bush, former head of the Central Intelligence Agency, heads a list of speakers expected to appear on campus this semester. Bush has accepted an invitation from the College Republicans, says Kathy Kimball, president of that group. No date has been set for his talk.

The College Republicans and the Young Americans for Freedom (a conservative youth group) plan campaigns to drum up student interest in specific issues.

The Young Democrats, on the other hand, prefer to publicize their

party's candidates. "We have such a large primary coming up that we decided our responsibility was to familiarize the students with the party's candidates," said Fred Sutherland, vice-president in charge of Young Democrat programs.

The College Republicans plan to campaign for a Congressional bill which would allow college students to deduct a portion of their tuition costs from their income tax, Kimball said. She said the group planned to emphasize this issue because it "is probably the closest one to the students."

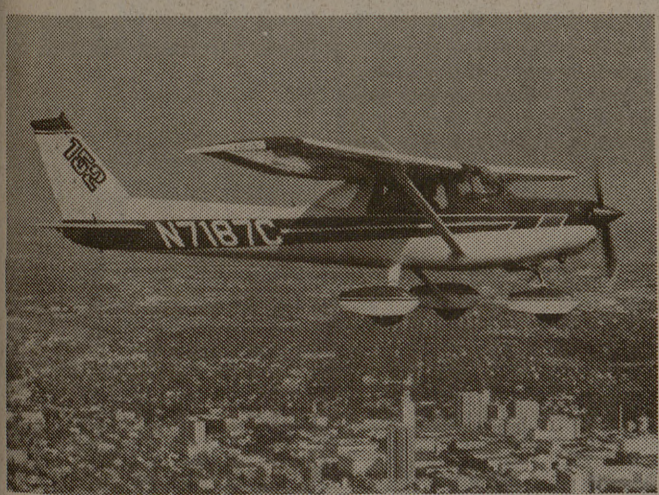
The Young Americans for Freedom are concentrating on a petition opposing the proposed Panama Canal treaty, said their president, Mark Elam.

"We feel very strongly that any

treaty that would transfer control of the canal to the Panamanians would be unwise," he said.

Three Democratic candidates running for retiring Congressman Olin Teague's seat have been lined up to speak by the Young Democrats, Sutherland said. Texas A&M economics professor Dr. Phil Gramm is expected to speak on campus in early February, Chet Edwards in early March. Sutherland added that Don McNeil is scheduled for March 7.

On the Republican side in that race, Wes Maury is expected to announce his candidacy in his appearance for the College Republicans Feb. 1, Kimball said.



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