

local

# Three centers help parents before, after conception

By LORI SHULER  
Special to the Battalion

Where can women in Bryan-College Station go for counseling on sex, birth control and unexpected pregnancies? Can they expect confidentiality, proper prescriptions, safe and clean labs and reliable counseling? Can teen-age girls find a sympathetic listener rather than a lecture on morals?

Three clinics in Bryan-College Station are designed to fill these requirements. While each maintains a steady stream of patients, many women don't know the centers exist and are uncertain about the services they offer.

At the Women's Referral Center in College Station women are advised by a young, friendly woman named Casey Rhea, center director. She has a smile like a very best friend and her voice is calm as she radiates sympathy and coolheadedness — traits she must use on a daily basis.

"Women have to be careful because you never know who you can trust. We're here to help women find who they can trust," Rhea said.

Just a couple of blocks behind Northgate is a similar type of clinic with a more familiar name — Planned Parenthood of Brazos County. The reception room is filled with racks of flyers on sex and birth control information. A poster on the wall sums up the clinic's purpose: "Take the Pill."

Cyndi Fehlmann is the receptionist and a counselor. She receives about six phone calls an hour from people needing information or wanting to set up an appointment.

"Sometimes I feel like an information center for birth control, but that's okay because that's what we're here for," said Fehlmann.

Betty Cotton expresses similar thoughts about the Brazos Valley Community Action Agency Family Planning Center, which she directs.

"The patient is the most important part of our clinic," Cotton said. "We try to have a friendly atmosphere and we cater to and help the patients as much as possible."

Services at each of the clinics vary but all three provide both pregnancy tests and counseling. At the Women's Referral Center and Plan-

ned Parenthood pregnancy tests cost \$3, while at Family Planning all charges are based on the patient's income. Results of a pregnancy test are found in about 2½ minutes.

"We average 35 patients per day and of these three to eight are pregnancy tests, about one-half of which are positive," said Fehlmann.

Rhea said she has about 150 patients per month, mostly for pregnancy tests and subsequent counseling and referrals. Cotton estimated 200 to 250 patients visit Family Planning each month for tests and all types of counseling.

All three said they will perform a pregnancy test for a woman of any age without parental consent. Both Family Planning and Planned Parenthood also do venereal disease screening.

Once a woman discovers she is pregnant she must then consider her options and make a decision. This is where counseling comes in. All three clinics employ trained, but not professional, counselors.

"I am often the only person available at a very emotional and trying time of a woman's life," said Rhea. "I just try to calm her and reassure her that there are people who want to help her."

"Our motto is 'every child should be a wanted child' and we operate on that basis," said Fehlmann. She said at Planned Parenthood a woman is given her choice — to keep the baby, give it up for adoption or terminate the pregnancy — and is counseled if she has any question.

Both Planned Parenthood and the Women's Referral Center will give adoption agency and abortion clinic referrals. Family Planning, however, only counsels women about their options.

"Referring pregnant women to abortion clinics and adoption agencies is not part of our job because we are funded with federal money. However, if a woman needs these different services, we usually refer her to the Women's Referral Center," Cotton said.

Both Planned Parenthood and the Women's Referral Center are funded through private funds. They each have a list of approved abortion clinics in various cities. The usual

price for an abortion is \$175 and up, depending on how advanced the pregnancy is.

"Centers like ours help women who have decided on an abortion find the best clinic for them so they don't just walk into an abortion clinic and not know anything about it," Rhea said.

There are no abortion clinics in Bryan-College Station. Rhea said there are no doctors in the city who will perform an abortion. She said although the Women's Referral Center is funded by the Ladies Center in Austin, she refers women to centers in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and Austin depending on their personal preference.

"Once a pregnant patient has decided she wants an abortion, I don't care where she goes as long as she goes to a good clinic. I want to make sure she gets good treatment — good emotional care is as important as good physical care," Rhea said.

Besides keeping the baby or terminating the pregnancy, a woman can give the baby up for adoption — which rarely happens. Rhea said about 75 percent of her pregnant patients choose abortion and the rest choose to keep the baby. Fehlmann and Cotton agreed only once or twice a year do they see a woman decide to give the baby up for adoption.

Rhea said part of the reason more women don't choose adoption is because there is no place in Bryan-College Station for them to stay or to receive financial aid and prenatal care until the baby is born. In addition, adoption is a much more difficult decision than abortion because a woman realizes she will have to live with the fact she has a child somewhere in the world for the rest of her life.

All three clinics are interested in keeping unwanted pregnancies from occurring, so both Planned Parenthood and Family Planning prescribe pills and other methods for preventing conception. The Women's Referral Center does not offer this service, but Rhea said she has literature on the different methods and refers women needing birth control to one of the other centers.

Both of these clinics employ a family planning nurse practitioner, a

registered nurse with family planning training. She performs a complete medical examination on every woman requesting birth control.

"We make it a practice not to practice medicine so women with anything unusual are sent to a doctor," Fehlmann said.

Rhea said she refers patients to one of the clinics rather than a private doctor because better counseling is received at a clinic than at a doctor's office.

"Often doctors won't explain about the side effects of birth control pills or talk to the woman about her feelings toward certain methods. Also, you may have to wait longer at a clinic but it's less expensive," said Rhea.

"We provide the same services for less cost than a gynecologist who would charge \$30 to \$50 for a medical exam, whereas we charge \$15," said Fehlmann.

Birth control pills can run \$5 to \$7 per month when prescribed by a physician and bought at a pharmacy. Planned Parenthood, however, sells them for 75 cents for each one-month packet. Other methods of birth control are comparatively inexpensive.

# IM complex to open with sports celebration

By JANA SIMS  
Campus Reporter

A 48-hour softball tournament, a Sports Club Fair and a variety of contests this weekend will serve as the grand opening of the Penberthy Intramural Field and a celebration of its namesake.

Even though the field has been in use for three years, the building was not finished until last summer and the opening activities were originally scheduled to accompany last fall's installation of the lights. The official opening ceremony will be held at 5:30 p.m. Friday, with the presentation of a plaque for the field's building.

## Labs set appliance safety regulations

United Press International  
NEW YORK — New safety requirements have been added to instruction manuals for consumer electrical appliances approved by the nonprofit testing organization, Underwriter's Laboratories, says Hada Lugo de Slosser of Cornell University's cooperative extension service.

Samples of the general safety instructions for electric ranges include: — Be sure the appliance is properly installed and grounded by a qualified technician. — Never use the range for heating the room. — Don't wear loose-fitting or hanging garments when using the range. They could catch fire easily.

Walter L. Penberthy, for whom the field is named, came to Texas A&M in 1926 and started the formalized intramural program. He was intramural director for about 40 years.

The softball tournament, open to students and faculty, begins at 6 p.m. following the opening ceremonies and ends at 6 p.m. on Sunday. There is a \$35 entry fee per softball team. The fee will go to pay officials and purchase trophies for first and second place winners in each of three divisions: men, women and co-rec.

The Sports Club Fair will be held from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday and will consist of demonstrations by the gymnastics, Roadrunners, polo, fencing, women's rugby and Tai Kwo Do teams.

A variety of contests will also take place Saturday, including tobacco spitting, home run hitting and Frisbee throwing contests. A new game — the lap-sit contest — also will be held.

The softball tournament is limited to 70 teams. Entries close Tuesday. The tournament schedule will be posted Wednesday in the Intramural Office.

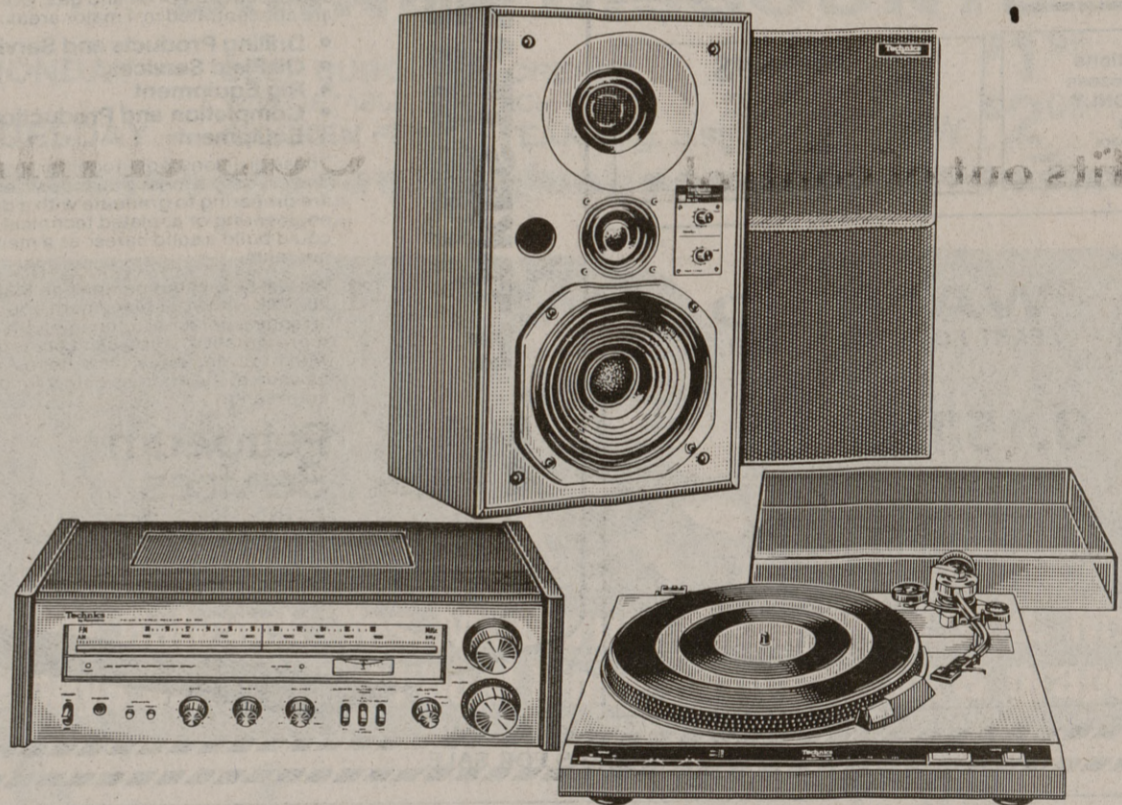


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