

Clinics to pay government

Policy says to reimburse

United Press International
WASHINGTON — A health care specialist said Monday new Reagan administration policies for clinics using government personnel will cost needy communities \$6 million to \$12 million — the cost of serving 90,000 people.

Daniel Hawkins of the National Association of Community Health Centers, representing more than 800 community-based health centers and clinics nationwide, said clinics will have to reimburse the government for National Health Service Corps personnel, an average increase of 230 percent.

"These clinics were given no warning of the payback policy changes; most are in the middle of their fiscal and grant years and have no real prospects for increasing overall revenues," he said.

"Thus the vast majority have but one way of cutting the increased payback demands — by cutting services and patients," he said. "We estimate that the increased payback will take from \$6 million to \$12 million away from these needy communities.

"This is equivalent to the cost of serving 90,000 persons at current clinic costs," he said.

Hawkins was one of several witnesses testifying before the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health and Environment on a bill by Rep. Bill Richardson, D-N.M., to alter the policies effective July 1.

The clinics using the NHSC personnel — many of them doctors working in communities in exchange for government aid in obtaining a medical degree — serve an estimated 2 million people nationwide.

The patients pay for the care on a sliding scale basis, with the

clinic paying the medical personnel and some costs while returning a percentage of the receipts to the government.

"These health centers provide basic health care to America's poorest, more disadvantaged people — from inner-city ghettos and urban Indian neighborhoods to rural migrant farmworker labor camps and isolated, resource-poor communities," he said.

Richardson, who represents a state where 120,000 people are served by NHSC clinics, said his bill is designed to institute a fairer and more equitable formula to determine the base figure of what percentage of the clinics' fees are directly attributable to the National Health Service Corps, and therefore, must be returned to the government.

"We are now confronted with a situation in which the NHSC

has demanded full payment for debts that have accumulated — in part and in some instances because of inconsistent repayment instructions by NHSC itself — and if these debts aren't repaid that the NHSC will pull their doctors out," he said.

Dr. Edward Martin, director of the Bureau of Health Care Delivery and Assistance, testified that the administration opposes the bill sponsored by Richardson and Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif.

"(The bill) would substantially eliminate payback by requiring no reimbursement until all operating costs, as determined by the site, are met," said Martin. "This legislation would have the negative effect of reducing the site's incentive to budget, to manage carefully with attention to costs, to operate efficiently and to seek self-sufficiency."

Border cities still feeling devaluation

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Cities along the Texas-Mexico border are still reeling from the effects of the peso devaluation and need help from Washington in several areas, two bank presidents and two county judges from Texas said Monday.

The four also said they supported an immigration bill such as the Simpson-Mazzoli Act to stop the massive influx of illegal aliens further stretching already straining resources.

"I'm firmly convinced Congress has to pass the Simpson-Mazzoli bill or something like it," said Cameron County Judge Moises Vela of Brownsville. "I know some people are afraid there will be discrimination.

"But you've got to start someplace. You have to stop the influx of people from other countries. I think this would be a place to start," he told the Joint Economic Committee.

Testimony from the four Texans centered on the problems two peso devaluations have caused along the border, including massive jumps in unemployment and startling drops in sales tax revenues.

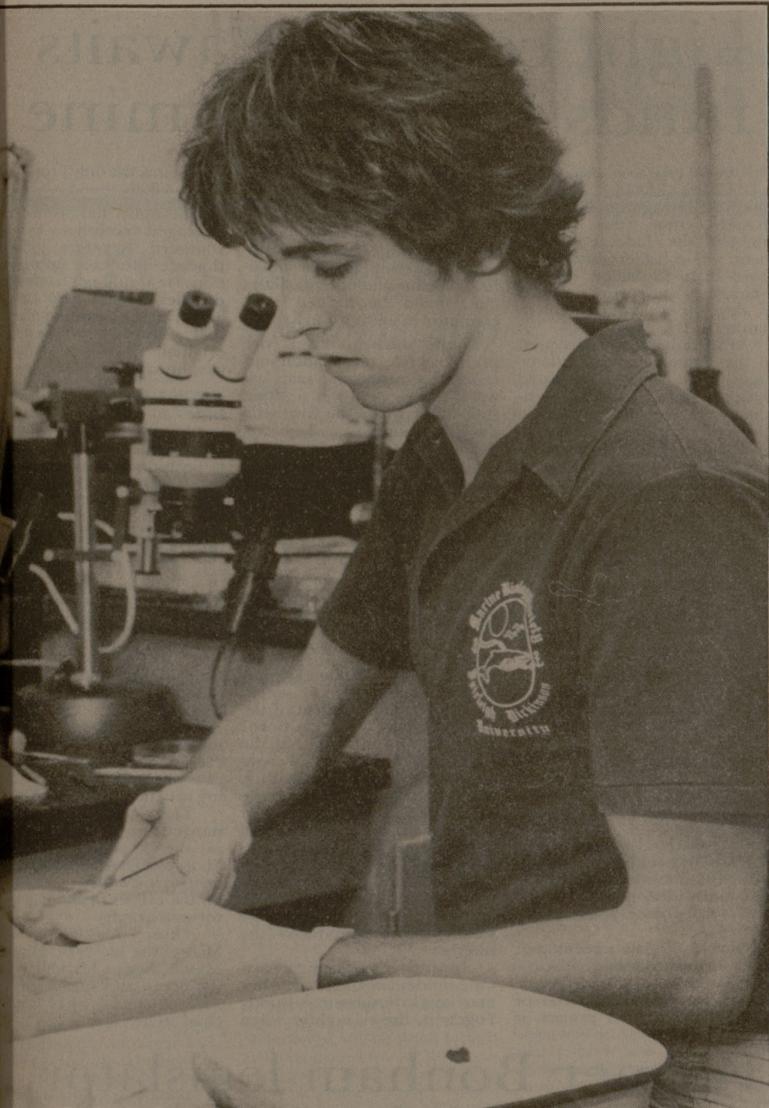
"With the peso's purchasing power cut to only one-seventh of its former level, the buying power of Mexican nationals along

the border collapsed," said Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, who chaired the hearing.

"The devaluations plunged the border economy into a depression just as the rest of our nation began to move into an economic recovery," he said. "Retail sales fell anywhere from 27 percent to 79 percent as the impact of the devaluation swept like brush fire up and down the Rio Grande."

Vela, El Paso County Judge Pat O'Rourke, El Paso National Bank President Merriman Morten and Texas Commerce Bank President Bob Duffey of Brownsville testified there were several ways Congress could help, including:

- Giving federal help to Texas schools required under a recent Supreme Court ruling to provide free education to illegal alien schoolchildren;
- Opening existing lanes of traffic on the current El Paso-Juarez International Bridge and continue to speed up movement on the "vital" Zaragoza Bridge project;
- Continue to develop the twin-plant program where U.S. companies set up plants near the border in Mexico for assembling and manufacturing products which are then returned to the U.S. for distribution.



Something fishy?

photo by A.E. King

Mike Dentzau, a graduate student from New Jersey, dissects a specimen of the Atlantic threadfin collected in the Gulf of Mexico.

Dentzau works on the A&M research vessel, The Excellence II, in order to determine the life history of the fish.

Residents seeking halt to Gulf Coast dredging

United Press International
HOUSTON — Angered by a continuing dredging operation that is destroying marine life and threatening their businesses, residents of East Matagorda County were ready to seek a court order halting the dredging.

A spokeswoman for the Matagorda County Citizens for Environmental Protection said today a class-action suit the group planned to file in Houston federal court Monday would challenge the dredging that violates the Federal Clean Water Act.

Sharon Serafino said the suit will seek a temporary restraining order halting the dredging of the Intracoastal

Waterway along the environmentally sensitive central Texas Gulf Coast.

Residents of the bay area want the dredging stopped because they fear the tar-like sludge being dumped into the bay threatens marine life and their businesses.

The residents Saturday used 20 shrimp and pleasure boats to form a symbolic blockade of the waterway but ended the protest after four hours when the dredging continued in the channel along the north shores of East Matagorda Bay.

The dredging is being carried out under the authority of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Edward McGehee, head of the construction and operations division for the Corps, said the operation was "scrutinized by all necessary state and federal agencies and the Environmental Protection Agency."

Muriel Tipps, who owns Tipps Bait Camp in Sargent on the eastern edge of the bay, was among the protesters Saturday. She said the blockade was intended to attract public attention prior to the court hearing.

Serafino alleged several oyster beds in the bay already had been destroyed by the dredging operation.

Textbook hearings site of confrontation today

United Press International
AUSTIN — Four days of hearings on \$36 million worth of proposed school textbooks formally opened Monday with discussions of vocational and math books.

The traditional confrontation between fundamentalist Christians and anti-censorship groups was delayed until today. Initial critical comments from representatives of Texas chapters of the National Organization for Women who objected to sexist language in various books.

Discussing retailing and marketing books, a NOW spokesman criticized the use of non-union free job titles such as delivery man instead of delivery person, foreman instead of supervisor and middleman instead of middle-person.

The main fireworks are expected to begin today when fundamentalist religious critics and

public schools in the 1984-1985 school year.

Previously, only criticism of texts was allowed, and the annual summer textbook hearings were dominated by fundamentalist religious critics.

People for the American Way vigorously protested the board practice last year and succeeded in pushing passage of a state law that mandated equal time for supporters as well as critics of texts.

People for the American Way, an anti-censorship group, speak on other proposed texts.

The hearings will end Thursday before a 27-member state textbook committee and Commissioner of Education Raymon Bynum.

A new state law, coupled with revised State Board of Education rules, will allow supporters — as well as critics — of proposed textbooks to testify on books up for adoption for Texas

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