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Health clinic goes from cure to cause

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

After eight years of providing low-cost or free medical aid for those in need, Eugene's White Bird Sociomedical Aid Station is going to change its image.

It will still be open for people with medical needs and little money, Elana Atherton, white Bird's preventative health coordinator says, but the clinic's emphasis will be changed from treating illnesses to finding and solving some of the causes of the medical problems.

A workshop to familiarize the public with the White Bird changes will be held tonight at 7, in the clinic at 341 E. 12th Ave.

Much of the workshop will be discussions on the health provider-client relationship, patient rights, medical advocacy and the quality of health care in Eugene, Atherton says.

Although the medical clinic will be closed during the month of January to remodel the building and introduce several new aspects to the medical program, Atherton says the White Bird Legal Aid services, pregnancy diagnosis, detoxification center, crisis intervention and other services offered outside of the medical clinic will be continued.

Part of White Bird's revamping comes as a response to the growing financial problems the clinic has faced nearly every year of its existence.

The latest financial crisis was the result of the state's failure to fund the clinic's detoxification and crisis intervention programs.

On an annual operating budget of nearly \$200,000, the clinic has outstanding debts of almost \$3,000 in back taxes and unpaid state unemployment and State Accident Insurance Fund bills.

The debts are half of what they were three months ago, thanks to several financial changes and fund-raising activities sponsored by the Home Fried Truck Stop restaurant.

In an effort to overcome some of the financial problems late last year, the clinic staff voluntarily cut



Photo by Erich Bookelheide

The White Bird Sociomedical Aid Station is remodeling both its facilities and its philosophy. The medical clinic will be closed until

February, but the legal aid, detoxification and pregnancy diagnosis centers will still be open. Help is still just a phone call away.

their monthly salaries by almost \$100. Each department of the White Bird organization has since become autonomous, one staff member explains, and salaries for the department members have been set at between \$400 and \$500, depending on the department.

The changes scheduled for this month may not solve all of White Bird's financial problems, but it will improve the quality of health care offered by the clinic, Atherton says.

"What we'd really like to do is to move more into general family

practice and away from the first-aid station image," she explains.

The clinic is in the process of hiring one full-time doctor who will work with the other phases of the organization to provide "holistic" health care for each client, Atherton says.

The addition of full-time medical advocates to help ease the doctor's schedule will begin when the medical clinic opens in February.

The advocates, trained counselors who will take client's medical history and talk about specific health problems before each pa-

tient sees the doctor, will be staff volunteers, she explains.

Part of the changes will also involve offering alternative medical care such as massage therapy, acupuncture and nutrition education, Atherton says.

Support groups made up of people with similar medical histories and the development of an effective outreach and follow-up program will also be incorporated into the clinic.

The changes, Atherton says, will provide much more improved health care for those who may need it the most.

"What we hope will happen is that every person who comes in for care will have up to 50 minutes spent talking with people about your health care needs," she explains.

Many health problems are often environmentally related, Atherton says, and talking about them with the medical advocates could lead to better health care for each individual.

"Instead of coming in and getting a prescription for a cough, the client will be able to talk about what may be causing the cough in the first place," she says.

ASUO adopts new budget-writing process

By DEBBY ABE
Of the Emerald

One of the most frustrating times of the year for ASUC-funded programs is now taking place; Budget submission deadline is, appropriately enough, on Friday, the 13th, in the Suite 4, IFC office.

There is a new twist this year to the budget-writing process, called the Plan-Program Budgeting System (PPBS). PPBS is essentially the same as zero-based budgeting.

The main purpose of PPBS is funding programs so they are responsible for carrying out specific goals. Budgets must now start with a zero amount of dollars rather than the former practice of simply adding on to last year's

PPBS system keeps better track of money

budget.

Molly Devlin, ASUO vice-president of program administration and finance, explains "There are two main parts of the PPBS budgets, one part which explains a program's goals, and a second part which gives the anticipated costs to fulfill these goals."

She adds, "This approach is more analytical and specified than in the past. Everything must be broken down now."

In the past, a program's budget could be generally itemized. Now, the individual costs of a category must be stated.

The ASUO budget committee will review the budgets, then send them with recommendations to the IFC.

The IFC will have two hearings on each budget; one to decide if the program's goals are acceptable, and another to decide if the stated anticipated costs of carrying out the goals are realistic.

"So far we've had no problem with the new budget system," says Maria Meza of the ASUO Off Campus Housing Office.

She adds, "I like the way they (the ASUO Budget Committee) has it out-

lined in its budget handout. It should be no problem to follow at all.

"The new format of the budget is a change in attitude," comments Walter Pavlich, also of ASUO Off Campus Housing.

"I don't think it's any major structural change. We're not looking at it any differently."

Lisa Barnhart of the ASUO Budget Committee adds, "The PPBS is a device to help us cut out any unnecessary spending and keep down expansion.

"We can use it to justify existing programs and avoid bureaucratic carry over of some programs. Most established programs are not a threat. The PPBS will just keep us better informed."