

Student Health Center doesn't receive enough care

by William Holt
Staff Reporter

Over the past year, the staff at our UNLV Student Health Center has been undergoing changes in policy.

In the state of Nevada, only doctors, and registered nurses with advanced training called Nurse Practitioners, are allowed to prescribe medication. That means Student Health Center patients have to wait longer to receive medicine.

The reason there is now a longer wait is that only the Nurse Practitioner at the Student Health Center, Lori Winchell, who is certified by the Nursing and Pharmacy State Regulatory Boards, can prescribe and dispense medicine like physicians. Registered nurses who are not Nurse Practitioners cannot dispense the medication.

The title of Nurse Practitioner requires one-to-two extra years of training in an advanced nursing program from an accredited college. This training can only be obtained out-of-state. Nurses must be approved by the Nevada State Board of Nursing and by the Nevada State Board of Pharmacy to be certified as Nurse Practitioners in the state of Nevada in order to dispense \ prescribe medicine. Writing prescriptions can only be done by the busy physicians and the few 100 nurse practitioners in Nevada.

Also, only physicians, certified Nurse Practitioners, and pharmacists can dispense medication, meaning that only they can package, label, and hand a package of medication to patients. Registered nurses who have not had the additional training are not able to hand medication to patients.

However, there is an exception to the rule. Centers categorized as public health programs, such as the Clark County Health Department, Planned Parenthood, and Economic Opportunity Board are allowed to have their regular RNs dispense medicine.

This exception to Nevada law doesn't help UNLV's Student Health Center.

"For 20 years, we have been running as a public health program," Winchell said. "We were never officially recognized, however, as a public health program."

In June 1989, Winchell met with the Nevada State Board of Pharmacy to request formal recognition as a public health program.

Describing the board's reaction, Winchell said, "They weren't clear about the definition of a public health program in Nevada, so their legal counsel researched the question. There was no definition at all in the Nevada state law. The Pharmacy Board did not feel that it was their responsibility to define it themselves."

So in lieu of the desired recognition, the Pharmacy Board



Yell Photo / Channing Perkaquard

Lori Winchell- Director of the Student Health Center is now able to dispense prescriptions to students.

gave the RNs at the UNLV Student Health Center a one year temporary dispensing privilege in hopes that Lori Winchell would obtain her nurse practitioner license in this state. The one year privilege ended on Sept. 1, 1990, and Winchell did get her license, but she and the staff have to follow strict guidelines issued on Sept. 25, 1990.

The guidelines require new prescriptions to be evaluated by the Student Health Center practitioners, preparation and dispensing of the medications must be done by the practitioners, and dispensing of prescription medication may require returning at a later time for pick-up.

The problem is that Nurse Winchell is the only accredited nurse practitioner at the center.

Health Center Staff speaks out

Some of the staff of the Student Health Center commented on their disadvantage to serve the UNLV community.

Joann Wassell, RN, said, "It's totally frustrating because we cannot accept a telephone order from a doctor and give it to a patient."

Pat Wheeler, RN, said, "The

impact is that the students have to wait and sometimes come back a day later. All we can do is to just explain to the students the situation."

Steve Andraki, M.D., said, "It's resulted in only a minor inconvenience for me, but it can be a disadvantage for the students."

Recycling: A chance to return life

by Michelle A. Padilla
Reporter

People have cut down too many trees, so there will soon be a charge for air.

Sound possible? According to an issue of Publishers Weekly this may not be impossible.

Trees produce the oxygen we breathe, yet trees are also used to make paper. If the trees are cut down to be used to produce paper, oxygen will become scarce.

For every one tree planted, three are cut down. Can paper recycling help make a difference?

Some people think so. Paper mills are beginning to use recycled paper for books and publications. Many paper mills are beginning to produce products made with a minimum of 50 percent recycled paper.

In March of 1990, the American Paper Association conducted a "paper week." They challenged people to recycle and not waste paper.

In 1988, 26 million tons of U.S. waste paper were collected for domestic use. That is approximately 30 percent of all paper and paperboard consumed in the United States. One of every three newspapers is recycled.

Some people are not recycling paper because they are unsure about it. They feel not enough is known about the technology of recycling paper.

The recycled paper can be used for numerous things. "The recycled paper used in fine paper, generally considered to be

paper used for writing, including book paper, is produced from envelope trimmings, waste from book printers, and other printers using fine paper," said a spokesman for Thomson-Shore, the short-run manufacturer. "Recycled newspaper, bags, and magazines, go into the recycling of such products as paper towels, bags, corrugated, and the like."

"Recycling can also help in Las Vegas," according to Marianne Carpenter, community outreach coordinator for the Environmental Protection Agency. "The United States is running out of land because of the landfills. People need to associate the word 'trash' with the word 'recycle.'"

An average person produces around a ton of trash every year. The average American throws away three to five pounds of trash daily. This contributes to 1 billion pounds of waste each day.

"Look at recycling paper as well as your trash as returning life," Carpenter explained, "There are some things that cannot be recycled, but many things can."

Making newspaper from virgin materials uses twice as much energy as recycled paper. For every 115 pounds of newspaper recycled, a mature tree remains standing. Newspapers account for approximately 10 percent of all municipal waste.

Carpenter also included, "Reuse, recycle, recover. Save the landfills and save the earth."

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