



## RUBY SAYS

by  
**Ruby Duncan**

Many of you know about the Operation Life community health center, but most don't realize the incredible hassles and frustrations that have been experienced since its development. I think the history is interesting and is indicative of the state of Nevada in its concern for the self-development of people.

We are extremely proud of the early screening center. We were praised by former Secretary of HEW, Casper Weinberger, who urged other states to follow Nevada's effort. We knew when he said Nevada, he meant Operation Life, since we have the largest center in the state. We've seen over 8,000 children since we opened the doors three years ago. That amount is double that of any other state in the union and six times the percentage of children seen in New York or California. Yet we have had to continually fight to open the center and then to keep it open.

We originally heard about the early screening program (EPSDT) at a national welfare rights conference in 1972 in Miami where it was given a high priority in actions by local welfare rights organizations. Two months later, Clark County Welfare Rights was working as Operation Life to establish such a center. Meetings with the Clark County Medical Society were set up but repeatedly cancelled by the society. Then, a screening center operated by the Medical Society and the Welfare Dept., opened at a hospital on the far side of town, hardly accessible to the people who needed its services, especially due to the lack of adequate transportation in the city.

At the same time, we set up a provider group of doctors to supervise the screening, all volunteers. Also, employment was given to welfare mothers to do Outreach and provide training as medical assistance.

The women who work at Operation Life know first hand the need for early periodic screening. Many of them have children now in their teens who have suffered irreversible injuries due to illnesses gone undetected at an early age, due to the lack of early screening. These women know the need for proper medical attention and diagnosis from a personal point of view, and have worked hard to bring children into the clinic and see that those children needing treatment get it. It is here that the success of the center lies, and the reason the Operation Life clinic has been the best in the nation. To this day, it is the only center that is wholly community operated by the people it is intended to serve.

At various times, Operation Life has received horrendous hassles from the welfare department and we have had to spend valuable time fighting back when we could be doing more productive things. The latest seems to be a state (not federal) bureaucratic procedure developed around a form called SAMI 25. Before children can be screened at the center, they must have the form signed by their caseworker, which means that people can't just come to the clinic as they have in the past. They must either go to the welfare department or call and request a SAMI form 25 be sent to their home, then come to the Operation Life clinic.

We are submitting an offer to Miller and the welfare department that if the welfare caseworker's signature does not have to be on SAMI 25 forms, we will take full responsibility for covering the costs of those children who are determined later to be ineligible for EPSDT. The welfare department does not have the extra workload, children will be screened, mothers won't have the constant harassment, and the welfare department will have their established accountability by them deciding after children are screened who is eligible and who is not. Otherwise, ineligible children will be screened at Operation Life at no cost to the Nevada State Welfare, but to Operation Life. That is how sure we are that their system is just another harassment and totally inadequate and meant to end the Operation Life program. Well, George?

## \*\*V\*A FACTS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Following are representative questions answered daily by VA counselors. Full information is available at any VA office.

**Q** - If a peacetime veteran dies in a VA hospital is entitlement established for VA burial benefits?

**A** - Yes. This is an exception to the general requirement of honorable wartime service to be eligible for this benefit.

**Q** - I am planning on buying a farm that will provide my primary income; however, there is no home on the property. Can I obtain a GI loan to purchase this farm?

**A** - No. A GI loan can be obtained only to purchase a farm with an existing residence on the property or to be constructed on the property, to be personally occupied by the veteran.

**Q** - How is graduate training time determined?

**A** - This is determined by the school. If the

school does not indicate the training time on the enrollment certificate, training time will be based on the standard established for undergraduate students.

**Q** - Are dependents eligible for VA medical care?

**A** - Eligible dependents may receive medical care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Veterans Administration (CHAMPVA). Eligible are spouse or child of a veteran who has a total disability, permanent in nature, resulting from a service-connected disability, and the surviving spouse or child of a veteran who has died as the result of a service-connected disability, provided they do not have entitlement under CHAMPUS or Medicare.



"BLACK MARKETING" becomes new intercollegiate sport as two teams of marketing communications students from black colleges in Wilberforce, Ohio, are competing nationally in a supermarket store-level merchandising support program in major cities with large black populations.

### Air Pollution

#### Killing Desert

Holly

Air pollution drifting more than 160 miles from Los Angeles to Death Valley appears to be killing off the fragile desert holly plant, according to a study just completed by a student working for the National Park Resources Studies Unit at UNLV.

Jack C. Fisher, 29, a biology student who has been investigating the decline of the silvery-leaved desert holly, said he has traced the cause to high levels of ozone in the air during summer months.

"During July I have measured the ozone level in Death Valley at twice the national standard for plant damage," Fisher said.

He said the plant, which is native to Death Valley, Southern Nevada and parts of Arizona, may be in danger of becoming extinct in the Death Valley area.

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by  
Otto McClarrin

### Researchers Develop Instrument Claimed to Detect Time of Ovulation

Three medical researchers said recently they have developed an instrument that can detect the time of month a woman ovulates, thus greatly improving the reliability of the "rhythm method" of birth control.

Two versions of the instrument, called the Ovutimer, are scheduled to be introduced soon. One is an instrument designed for use by gynecologists treating women having difficulty conceiving. The other, simpler instrument is being developed for home use, chiefly as a birth control device.

The researchers said the instrument for gynecologists will cost between \$500 and \$1,000 and will be available at the end of 1976. The much simpler home version will cost about \$10, plus \$2 to \$3 a month to replace disposable parts, and will be on the market in 1977.

Both instruments are based on research that shows that the fluidity of the mucous coating of the cervix holds the key to the exact time of ovulation. For most of the month, the cervical mucous is a thick, sticky substance that protects the internal female genital tract and makes it difficult for sperm to enter.

But during ovulation, when an egg is released from the ovary, that cervical mucous begins to thin out and becomes more fluid to enhance acceptance of the sperm. Only when the cervical mucous is watery can sperm penetrate and conception take place.

The instruments make it possible to indicate immediately when the peak fertile period is occurring - and the total time a woman is in her fertile period. The researchers, Drs. Harold Kosasky and Samuel Schuster, of the Harvard Medical School, and Louis Kopito, of MIT, said the devices will be as easy to use "as a thermometer" and "as effective as birth control pills."

### Measles and Polio Epidemics Possible

Measles epidemics could get worse and massive outbreaks of crippling polio are possible unless about five million young children are vaccinated against both diseases according to a National Center for Disease Control official.

Dr. John Witte, director of the Immunization Division of the CDC, recently warned 30 to 35 percent of pre-school age children - or about five million - lack proper immunization against polio and measles. "The thing that really concerns us is that there are safe, effective vaccines against the childhood diseases of polio, measles, diphtheria, rubella and mumps and parents are not getting their children immunized," Dr. Witte said.

He said measles epidemics already are occurring in many areas and the number of reported cases of polio is well above last year. So far this year, 23,880 cases of measles have been reported, compared to 13,635 for the same period in 1975. Dr. Witte said the actual number of cases probably is double the number reported by state health departments.

### Abuse Treatment Agencies to Receive Aid

CARSON CITY - Eighteen substance abuse treatment agencies in Nevada will receive a total of \$415,250 for fiscal year 1977 from the Nevada Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Paul Cohen, chief of the bureau, has announced. The Las Vegas agencies include: Operation Bridge, \$19,635; SNDAC, Alcohol, \$29,677; SNDAC, Central Intake, \$25,789; Nike House, \$9,555; Latino Youth Treatment, \$11,970; Latino Education, \$20,000.