

A NURSE PRACTITIONER PROGRAM

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The College of Nursing is co-operating with the Saskatchewan Department of Public Health to prepare nurse practitioners who will work in four pilot project communities in Saskatchewan. The provincial government is providing financial support for the training program, is giving bursary support to the four candidates and will make funds available to the four communities for a two-year period in order to carry out the project. The Research and Planning Division of the Department of Public Health will evaluate the project to determine whether utilization patterns of those seeking health services have been altered.

The curriculum for the training project was developed by a committee of faculty members from the College of Nursing and the Department of General Practice of the College of Medicine. The program will take six months and will have a concurrent preceptorship with a physician in general practice. Courses include: (1) Diagnosis: History-Taking, Physical Assessment and Laboratory Procedures; (2) Management and Treatment of Disease Conditions; (3) Counselling and Teaching for Health Maintenance; (4) Ethics, Roles and Relationships.

The candidates were selected and the program began in March. They will start work in September, 1974 in their communities. Three of the communities do not have a resident doctor. The nearest doctor is 25 to 35 miles away. A physician in a nearby community will act as an advisor or mentor for the nurse-practitioner who will be the primary health care professional for the people in her community. The fourth community has physician services and the nurse-practitioner will be associated with a group of physicians and will travel out to several nearby communities to provide health services. In every case the nurse-practitioner will be expected to assess the client and determine a course of action which might include initiating treatment.

During the course of the two-year project a joint committee with representatives from the Saskatchewan Medical Association, Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association, Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association, College of Medicine and College of Nursing University of Saskatchewan, and the Research and Planning Division of the Department of Public Health will monitor the service. Matters

requiring interpretation or policy decisions will be referred to this committee.

The College of Nursing will expect to gain a few tangible benefits from participating in the program. A number of audio-visual aids and auto-tutorial materials will be developed for the training program. Most of these can then be used in the two baccalaureate programs offered by the College. In addition the faculty will be assessing how preparation for the nurse-practitioner role can be incorporated into the basic baccalaureate program. We will be seeking to identify the principles and techniques that are presently included in our programs and then will determine the additional preparation that is required for the nurse practitioner role. It is hoped that within the next year or two this additional preparation can be offered at least on an elective basis to students enrolled in a regular program of the College of Nursing. Two important features of our present programs are to emphasize the rural nature of our province and to prepare graduates for the possibility that they may be working in isolated situations. An objective of offering preparation for the nurse-practitioner role would be to enable the nurse to work in a very independent way but with full knowledge of how she may use collaborative support from other health professionals including the physician.