

# Med Center drug therapy unique

by Bill Smitherman

What has been described as one of the most unique drug treatment programs in existence was begun recently at the NU Medical Center in Omaha.

## Nation's walkers helps poverty

Throughout the United States during the past several years people have demonstrated their concern for the Walk for Development. In this project people of all ages become involved in a campaign against the causes of domestic and international poverty.

The Lincoln Walk for Development has been organized locally as a fund raising project in an effort to help overcome many of the problems related to poverty.

Dennis Demmel, coordinator for the Lincoln Walk, said next year's walk is being planned for May. The Walk for Development committee is now in the process of recruiting students to organize the walk and compile project reports.



Through the Walk for Development, citizens and students organize to publicize and administrate the walk project. Committees select recipient agencies, obtain solicitation and walk permits and recruit walkers.

Each walker is responsible for soliciting his own sponsors, each of whom pledges to contribute an amount of money for every mile that is completed by the walker.

The money collected is divided according to specifications of the American Freedom from Hunger Foundation, sponsor of the Walk for Development. The Lincoln Walk is lending support to two major local projects and one symbolic domestic project.

The goal of the Walk for Development is "to teach people that steadfast support of global development is absolutely fundamental to our national interest," according to Demmel.

Organizers of the 1972 Walk are meeting Tuesdays at 8:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union. All are welcome. For more information call 435-7486 or 435-2961.

## Vet students receive awards

Five University of Nebraska students of veterinary medicine have been awarded \$500 from a fund provided by poet singer Rod McKuen.

Those receiving the scholarships are Donald N. Andrews, Holbrook; Charles L. Martin, Lexington; Daryl G. Meyer, Sidney; Terry W. Schukei, Kenesaw; and Guy L. Pidgeon, Julesburg, Colo.

McKuen made the initial contribution for the scholarships in support of studies in veterinary medicine as part of his personal program to encourage young people to enter the field of veterinary medicine.

Dr. James G. L. Williams, director of the ten-bed center, said the program includes treatment, research and training.

WILLIAMS said that one of the keys to the center's therapy program is a team approach. There are several people working with patients and a counselor is on hand at all times, he said.

Patients are invited to be part of the center team and take part in research, he said.

"Drug patients often have a low self-esteem," Williams said. "If a patient can feel he is a member of a team doing important research it can improve his self-esteem. This is a form of therapy."

TREATMENTS vary according to the needs and desires of the patient, Williams

said. Group therapy, individual therapy and substitutive programs such as methadone maintenance are among treatments available to patients.

"One of the things we want to do is approach therapy from an intensive point of view," he said. "The treatment is usually intense and thus lasts for shorter periods."

WILLIAMS said the center is also developing a new approach to detoxification and withdrawal.

"We are approaching the problem with precision," he said. The center is doing extensive physiological monitoring of patients during these periods to determine their physical condition and what treatment they need.

The staff of 25 includes 12 assistant counselors, mostly in

their late teens and early twenties with a wide variety of backgrounds. Williams said the counselors were carefully selected from a number of applicants.

WILLIAMS said that proper staffing is important in the program. "We don't believe in the simple behavioral approach to drug problems," he said. "We care for our patients as individuals."

All of the patients in the center are voluntary. The doors of the ward are locked so that outsiders can't enter, but patients are not locked in. Williams said there is no sense of confinement.

"The method seems to be working," he said. "Patients are really feeling they are part of the team and are enthusiastic about the program."

THE CENTER IS also involved in team efforts with community organizations and

services concerned with drug problems. Patients are referred to the center from these organizations.

They are also encouraged to keep in contact with the referring agency and the center after they are discharged.

"You can't just throw a drug patient back into the same environment when he leaves the center," Williams said. "These people need support and we try to see they get it."

THE CENTER is also open to individuals who are seeking treatment, Williams said. The center's phone in manned 24 hours a day and anyone who needs help can call or come in, he said. The number in Omaha is 541-4870.

Charges at the center are on a sliding scale, Williams said. "No one will be charged anything he feels he can't afford. We are here to help people."

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