



**GOT A COLD?
GET A FIX FROM
YOUR LOCAL
HEALTH AID.**

Health Aide Program 'continually improved'

by Mary Kay Roth

You're hit by cold or flu germs and mother isn't around to offer her tender loving care? Enter—your local health aide, armed with first aid kit and general first aid knowledge.

Although the Health Aide Program has been at UNL for more than 15 years, it is being continually improved, agreed Patricia Kampfe and Celeste Knipmeyer, two community health nurses.

Until mid-March they will be interviewing students for next year's health aide positions.

Health aides are salaried part-time workers, serving as communication links between the University Health Center and UNL students. The entire Health Aide Program depends on the quality of health aides, Knipmeyer said, and they are getting better every year.

When the Health Aide Program was begun in 1957, student assistants volunteered to double as health aides in order to fight a flu epidemic. Now, 145 students—one for each floor of every residence hall, one for each Greek house and at least one for each student co-op—are paid \$5 weekly.

Interested schools from across the nation have sent letters and representatives to UNL to observe the program, Knipmeyer said.

Health aides must have at least sophomore standing, but no specific major is required.

Serve for one year

Each health aide can serve only one year, and at the end of the term must submit two names to fill the position the following year. The aides are then interviewed and chosen on the basis of effective communication skills, leadership and possibly grade point average, Knipmeyer said.

When hired, they sign what she termed "conscience" commitment contracts, so they know the health center's expectations.

Following an eight-hour crash course in first-aid, each of the health aides must take an "on the job training" UNL class, "Peer Health Education."

"They try to cover the most common student problems in the first semester," Knipmeyer explained, "and move on to more unusual complaints second semester."

Three to 10 cases

Each health aide handles about three to 10 cases per week, Knipmeyer estimated, but during the flu season the load is up. She said the most common complaints are colds, sore throats and stomach aches.

Kampfe, a former health aide, agreed. She said most students come to the health aides with "the minor physical and emotional concerns of college students."

If symptoms of a more serious disease are present, Kampfe said, the health aides refer the student to a doctor or the University Health Center.

She stressed that all medication given by health aides is nonprescription.

Advice from coordinators

If a health aide has a problem and doesn't know how to handle a situation, he or she can go to one of 11 coordinators for advice.

Kampfe said the coordinating system began three years ago, when the Health Aide Program was becoming too large for a few people to handle.

Coordinators are students and former health aides who earn \$10 per week and supervise additional activities.

Each health aide must submit a health tip and participate in a health education program organized by the coordinators, Kampfe said.

"It's a difficult job motivating and teaching your own peers," Kampfe said, "but you gain from the experience."

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