



Apr. 14, 1972

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL SCHOOL AT DALLAS

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DALLAS--The North Texas area's first baccalaureate program to train physicians' assistants will be begun this fall by The School of Allied Health Professions at Dallas, it was announced today.

The program is designed to train generalist assistants capable of becoming "extensions of the physician," said Dr. John W. Schermerhorn, dean of the School, which is a component of The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School.

"The role of this newest member of the health care team is to relieve the physician of routine duties not requiring the expertise that the physician has developed over many years of education, training and experience," Dean Schermerhorn said.

"In this way, the physician, supplemented by a professional assistant who has been trained by and for physicians, can spend more of his time seeing, evaluating, diagnosing and treating larger numbers of patients as well as spending additional time with patients who have serious conditions."

The program's first class of 10 students will register August 28-30 and begin a two-year academic course of study leading to a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Care Sciences. A second class of comparable size will be accepted in January, 1973.

To qualify for the limited number of openings, applicants must have completed 60 semester hours of college work in arts and sciences. While not an actual prerequisite, previous civilian or military medical training and experience also are "highly desirable," Dr. Schermerhorn said.

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first add SAHP

The first year of training--equivalent of the college junior year--will consist of classroom and laboratory instruction in the basic medical sciences, the dean explained. These include human anatomy, physiology, human growth and development, microbiology and pharmacology.

The program's second year consists entirely of clinical training under physician preceptors in hospitals, offices and group clinics, he said.

Upon graduation, the physicians' assistants will go to work under supervision of primary-care physicians. Among routine tasks they can perform are the taking of medical histories, applying and removing casts and bandages, giving physical examinations, and explaining diagnostic procedures to patients.

The assistants also could deliver routine services to patients in homes, hospitals, nursing homes and other extended care facilities at the direction of their supervising physician, Dr. Schermerhorn said.

John C. Delahunt, coordinator of the physicians' assistant program, explained that the generalist nature of the training should best qualify the assistants to help provide basic medical services in areas where they are needed most--rural sectors and heavily populated urban centers.

"In urban areas, many citizens live in unsatisfactory circumstances with little or no primary medical care available," Delahunt said, "and in the surrounding rural areas another cross-section of humanity is living in a sparsely settled area with little access to a physician."

A survey by the Regional Medical Program of Texas found that 19 Texas counties have no practicing physicians, Delahunt noted. And the state's physician-to-population ratio in 1970 was one to 1,017 --compared to a national average of one to 700.

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In several Texas counties, he added, the ratio ranges up to one doctor for every 3,000 to 5,000 population.

The School of Allied Health Professions envisions annual expansion of the physicians assistants program, reaching the level of 40 new students per year within four years.

Interested persons meeting the 60-semester-hour requirement with the proper arts and sciences prerequisites may obtain applications by writing to the Registrar, School of Allied Health Professions, 5323 Harry Hines Blvd., Dallas, Texas 75235.

Completed applications must be postmarked no later than midnight May 15.

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