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DALLAS--Dallas County's Parkland Memorial Hospital has been named as one of 20 sites around the country chosen to participate in a \$12-million pilot program aimed at improving health care for high-risk young people.

Sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the program will consolidate health and social services in hopes of reducing the incidence of venereal disease, pregnancy, substance abuse, accidents, homicides, suicides and mental illness among young people in the 15 to 24 years age group.

Parkland will house a special new clinic for adolescents and young adults and will coordinate its efforts with those of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas and the Dallas County-wide Health Department.

The program based at Parkland will receive approximately \$150,000 a year for four years and it is the only location in Texas chosen by the foundation to participate in the demonstration project.

The program and grants were announced April 19 via a live, closed-circuit telecast news conference originating in New York City and transmitted to Dallas and the other participating cities.

As in the other cities selected for the foundation program, young adults in Dallas County have higher rates of death and disease than the national average in at least five of the eight high-risk health problems.

For venereal disease, the Dallas County rate is 2.5 times the national average; for homicides, more than three times the national average; suicides and teen-age pregnancies, 1.5 times the national average; drug abuse violations roughly five times the national average. Mental illness is more difficult to quantify, but a serious problem is obviously present.

Currently, there is no effective program for the identification, treatment and referral for long-term follow-up for health problems for high-risk young people in Dallas County, according to Dr. Robert McGovern, project director and professor of Pediatrics at The UT Health Science Center.

The Young Adult Clinic program will focus on these problems and will also serve to educate health care providers about the special needs of high-risk adolescents and young adults.

The clinic will be physically located adjacent to the Parkland Emergency Room and is scheduled to open on July 1.

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McGovern notes that throughout the Dallas County area, there are more than 200 active agencies concerned with the well-being of young adults. One of the important features of this program is the establishment of effective liaison and coordination with these agencies in order to ensure appropriate long-term follow-up care.

One of the foundation's objectives for the program is to determine whether health and social services for these young people can be delivered more effectively and economically, especially in the face of reduced federal support for such programs and services.

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