

August 15, 1980

News

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas
5323 Harry Hines Boulevard Dallas, Texas 75235 (214) 688-3404

CONTACT: Ric Spiegel
Office: 214/688-3404
Home: 214/528-7922

*****Dallas suburbs to begin receiving new channels, including health program

DALLAS--In an effort to expand its television programming and prepare for the onset of cable TV in Dallas, the Department of Biomedical Communications at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas will be offering health-related programming this fall to 11 Dallas suburbs currently enjoying their own cable service.

As of October, some of the health science center's productions will be available to residents of Addison, Carrollton, Allen, Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Frisco, Garland, Lancaster, McKinney, Bedford and Euless. According to television services director Mike Sheridan, some of the small cities surrounding Dallas have had the cable for years.

"In fact, this is how the cable business has traditionally grown up," says Sheridan. "It starts in the outlying areas and later spreads to the large metropolitan centers. Dallas is the last truly major area in the country to be receiving cable."

This move, explains Sheridan, allows the health science center to expand into the consumer television market long before the actual Dallas cable is in operation. (Even though the groundwork is laid, city-wide cable service is still more than two years away.)

TAGER (The Association for Graduate Education and Research in North Texas) is the television network that carries programs produced by the health science center and its principal client, DAHTS (Dallas Area Hospital Television System). Such programs currently include medical grand rounds, continuing education for physicians and patient education.

With development funds awarded it by the U.S. Department of Commerce, TAGER will construct a satellite earth station (downlink) to increase transmission power, and additional computer and graphics equipment. Further, by arranging to use the transmission facilities of the Regional Instructional Television Consortium (RITC) in Richardson, the TAGER network will expand its availability to the outlying areas of Dallas.

In effect, TAGER, and therefore the health science center, will have access of up to four channels each day after 4 p.m. RITC will broadcast the TAGER signal to home viewers in the 11 cable areas, and for the first time, health science center programs will be seen by the public.

Although four channels have been set aside for TAGER's use in the fall, the health science center will make use of only one, for one hour each night. "Alive and Well," a consumer health series produced here several years ago, will be the program broadcast to cable-equipped homes. Additional programs are now being researched and planned. Presently, however, the only programs Sheridan foresees producing for this market are those aimed specifically at the health consumer.

"The importance of cable television goes beyond first-run movies and sports events," says Sheridan. "Medicine and health education is our business, and now we have our first opportunity to develop it and offer it in the home."

##

DISTRIBUTION: A,SA,B,SC,SL