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DALLAS---A free public forum on phobias will be held on September 5 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Gooch Auditorium at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas. Titled "Phobias: A National Epidemic," the forum is sponsored by the UTHSCD Department of Psychiatry, the Mental Health Association of Dallas County and the Phobia Society of America.

A six-year study recently completed by the National Institute of Mental Health states that one in nine individuals suffer from a phobia ---an unreasonable fear that interferes with one's life--- making it the number two mental health problem in the United States. Phobias are considered the most treatable of psychiatric disorders, with cure rates of 70 to 80 percent.

The September 5 program will be presented in three parts. The first covers "Phobia Development and Treatment Models." The speaker will be James O. Wilson, director of the Phobia Center of the Southwest, a clinic specializing in phobias and obsessive/compulsive disorders.

Wilson is governor of the Phobia Society of America and co-author of Beyond Fear, a book soon to be published.

Dr. Rege Stewart, associate professor of psychiatry at UTHSCD and director of Parkland Memorial Hospital's psychiatric outpatient clinic and its anxiety disorders clinic, will speak on "Medical Aspects of Phobias." Stewart will include information from her recent research into "Neuroanatomical Correlates of Panic Disorders."

The final presentation will be "From Panic to Peace," a panel discussion by recovered phobics covering topics pertinent to the recovery process. The moderator will be Bob Handley, a recovered phobic and author of the book Anxiety and Panic: Their Cause and Cure.

This is the first public program on the subject of phobias to be presented in the Dallas area. Professionals and non-professionals interested in the subject are invited to attend free of charge. Time will be allowed for questions from the audience.

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