



[Back](#)

New programs for sex education begun by Columbia health service

By JULIUS GENACHOWSKI

The Columbia Health Service began last night a new health education program to fill a need that officials expect to increase when women enter the College this fall.

Masterminded by a newly hired physician who was charged with revitalizing the health service's education efforts, the program began with a series of lectures and discussions on birth control and women's health issues.

The program, which is open to students of both sexes, will also include counseling and medical care to supplement the health service's regular offerings.

Health service director Richard Carlson said the education program would help the service meet "a need that has gone unmet" and that would rise when the College goes coed.

The health service already sees women in the graduate divisions, but "the influx of more young women creates more of a need for information," Carlson explained. "One of the functions of a health service is providing health information," he added.

The physician directing the new program, Martha Katz, was hired because the health service's staff had too many other responsibilities that prevented it from performing

this education role, Carlson said.

"It was clear that the health service had such a volume of patients

and work that the physicians were limited to seeing patients only on a daily basis," he explained. "We needed a person with time built into the schedule to do some of the education programs."

But Katz said the health education program would be limited by the health service's shortage of space, noting that last night's lecture and discussion were held in a small waiting area in the service's suite on the third floor of John Jay.

"We have a commitment to do what we can with the space we have, but it's already stretching the walls," she complained.

The health service, also anxious to expand its gynecological services before women arrive at the College, submitted a plan last month to expand onto the fourth floor of Jay, but the university has not yet decided upon the proposal.

In the past, the health service has sponsored occasional information programs, including presentations on herpes and rape counseling.

By contrast, the new program's first lecture series, entitled "Women's Health Evening Sessions," will be held at the same time—6:45 p.m.—on each of the next four Wednesdays, except for

Thanksgiving eve, Katz said.

She said similar programs had been planned to inform students about gay health problems, drug abuse, alcoholism, smoking and stress management.

She added that her long-range goal was to establish a system under which students would be trained to lead peer group discussions on important health issues.

Last night, Katz and nurse Susan Hessner spoke on the female anatomy and how a woman should monitor her health status. Topics discussed included self-breast exams, birth control and "what to do to stay healthy," Katz said.

She explained that one of the positive ideas to come out of the women's movement in the 1960s was that "women should be in charge of their own health."

"Women should know what things they should see a physician for, how often, what a physician should be doing and what things should be routinely checked," Katz said, explaining that one of the goals of the current series was to make women "more informed consumers."

Men were also invited to the program, Katz added, because they

“should learn about women’s bodies.” Last night’s “intimate” session was attended by a College student as well as by women from Barnard and several graduate schools, she said.

The lectures are open to all members of the Columbia community, and those who pay the health service fee are eligible to

return the following Wednesday afternoon for individual counseling and medical care.

“Usually, people have more questions than can be conveyed in a short doctor-patient discussion,” Katz said, adding that women who had never learned how to perform a self-breast test and had never taken or understood a complete gynecological exam were especially urged to take advantage of this opportunity.

Katz stressed that men should attend next week’s discussion, which will focus on birth control. “I would like partners to come to the birth control sessions,” she said. “You can’t talk about birth control without talking about shared partner responsibility.”

Sex education is Katz’s first priority, she said, because the in-

flux of undergraduate women next fall “highlights that fact that there are issues revolving around sexuality that have to be discussed.”

The next target, Katz said, is the gay male population on campus. She explained that there are health problems particular to homosexuals that need to be discussed and explained.

Ultimately, Katz said, she hoped the physicians at the health service would act as teachers and consultants to train students to advise themselves. “We want to be available as resources,” she said. A peer counseling program of this kind would be “exciting” because it would involve students deeply in their own health care, Katz added.

This article has been automatically clipped from the Columbia Daily Spectator 4 November 1982, organised into a single column, then optimised for display on your computer screen. As a result, it may not look exactly as it did on the original page. The article can be seen in its original form in the [page view](#).