

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR

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[ARTICLE]

## Health services sees ever-growing number of customers

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You've never been sick a day in your life, right? Then this could only happen to you.

It wasn't the food on the plane, it wasn't the cruise around Manhattan (you don't get seasick), and it wasn't that first greasy slice of Koronet pizza. But into your first week of college, just when you're trying to assert your independence, you've awoken to what feels like malaria or bubonic plague and you don't know where to go.

Welcome to the University Health Service, (UHS), your one-stop temperature-taking, stress-counseling, vaccinating, coughing, aching, stuffy-head fever so you can rest service.

As much as college students try to avoid illness, getting sick at school seems to follow Murphy's Law; if it can happen, it will, and chances are you too will visit the second or third floor of John Jay hall for something as trivial as the sniffles or as rare as the chicken pox.

You can take comfort at least in knowing that the University has been preparing for what UHS officials say is an ever-growing number of students utilizing the service.



The service, which includes a mental health clinic, women's health service, and a health education department has between 50,000 to 60,000 visits per year, according to Health Services Director Dr. Richard Carlson.

Students, faculty, and staff of the University as well as students from Barnard, Union Theological Seminary, Jewish Theological Seminary and International House are treated at the health services center, so make room on the waiting room couch for the Dristan delegation.

Visiting scholars and persons injured on the campus are also treated at Health Service.

Upon entering the center, you must fill out just two information sheets before what can be a 45 minute wait if you don't have an appointment.

The first sheet asks you to detail what you can remember of that spotless medical record you were once so proud of and the other requires you to describe your current symptoms in 50 colorful words or less.

In order to make your visit to the center less trying, UHS officials installed a new computerized filing and scheduling system to store it's more than 15,000 active patient files and



The new system utilizes the “swipe” card identification feature to document patient visits, which means you have to bring your I.D.

You should be very familiar with the swipe feature, it’s the one you must use to get into your dorm, get food on the meal plan and check out books in many of the libraries.

UHS staff will soon be adding treatment for “swipe elbow” to their primary care list.

The health education component of the center conducts informational programs and group discussions throughout the year in topics ranging from alcohol and drug abuse to eating disorders and proper nutrition (for those of you who may begin to think of Entenmann’s treats as one of the four food group).

The department is comprised of peer educators and counselors who will probably visit your dorm with an enlightening program on AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

If you don’t know how to use a condom by now, this is your chance to get a demonstration.

The department, which will operate under a new director this year, also conducts educational counseling in contraception, sexual violence and date rape.



If you should find yourself at the point of talking to the walls during exam time, you may find a much more receptive ear in the Mental Health Clinic.

With a staff of four psychiatrists, psychologists and clinical social workers on hand, you'll find people who may not theorize about your childhood or show you smudgy inkblots but you will find men and women who will try and help you with those academic and other college woes.

Speaking of the health service, University officials began a mad rush to distribute measles shots last semester in accordance with a new state law that requires any student born after Jan. 1, 1957 and taking six or more credits to have at least two measles vaccinations.

The law followed an increase in reported measles cases in New York City.

So if you want to register and you haven't had your vaccination, rush to the Health Service for a quick and virtually painless Measles/Mumps/and Rubella shot. It's called the MMR, you'll take it and you'll like it!

So that is your friendly health service...live it, love it, try to avoid it, but don't be afraid of it. Remember, sound mind/sound body and all that sort of thing.