

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**"HER PLACE FOR HEALTH" :
UNIVERSITY NURSES RESPOND TO PREVENTIVE HEALTH NEEDS OF WOMEN**

In 1993, The New England Journal of Medicine published research which strongly suggested that women were not consistently receiving preventive health care from traditional medical care practices. This study, conducted by Dr. Nickie Lurie, from Hennepin County Medical Center, focused on the gender of the provider as being a primary factor, with female providers being more likely to provide preventive health care to women than their male counterparts. Additional studies, including those done by nurse researchers, look at other barriers to accessing this care including those things which are often difficult to measure such as the relationship between client and provider.

In response to this need, several nursing faculty at the University of Minnesota, School of Nursing have started a primary and preventive health care clinic for women. It's located in Riverside Park PLaza in Minneapolis. Pat Camillo, a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Women's Health and certified nurse practitioner is Director of this new health service. " Nurses have a long tradition of focusing on preventive health services," says Ms. Camillo, "which actually dates back over a hundred years when public health nurses provided care in the community. Our educational programs and practices continue to emphasize prevention as the key to good health." This new clinic will service only women - from young adulthood through elder years. " Although we will see women of all ages, we are particularly concerned about reaching middle years and older women," says Ms. Camillo, "since this group stands out in national health surveys, as being least likely to get this kind of care."

Women who come to this clinic will get a comprehensive health assessment which includes a complete physical exam and identification of personal and family risk factors. An individualized plan will be designed for each client to modify those risks. First time visits can take up to two hours. Follow up visits average 30-45 minutes. " Nurses do a great deal of health teaching and this takes time." Other services which are offered include special assessments for PMS, incontinence, post partum depression, menopause, infertility counseling and family planning.

Women have the option to come just for these services or to continue with the clinic for their basic primary health care needs. Some of these needs might include treatment for common acute conditions such as sore throats, coughs and urinary tract infections as well as management of stable chronic diseases such as hypertension and arthritis. A network of physicians and other health care professionals, who are sensitive to the needs of women, are available on a referral and consultation basis.

An advisory council of women from the community has also been formed. They represent members of various women's groups in the state. Input from this group has been extremely helpful in making decisions regarding how this clinic would operate. Suggestions such as providing child care during Saturday morning hours and being open at least one evening per week have been implemented. In addition, this group has worked on the creation of a logo and a brochure. All of this is in keeping with the philosophy of the clinic, which is to encourage women to participate and help fashion the health care they need. This is also reflected in the name "Her Place for Health".

Costs for these services are similar or slightly lower than the cost for a general physical exam in a medical office. Nurses in Minnesota are able to get direct reimbursement for services from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, CHAMPUS, The Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan, Medical Assistance, and Minnesota Care. Although nurses have never been given independent provider status from Medica and Preferred One, both groups have indicated that they are interested in providing access to this clinic for their subscribers and will address this issue in board meetings this July.

For women who are uninsured and who do not qualify for medical assistance, we are able to provide free mammograms and pap smears as a result of our association with the Minnesota Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program. Although this is available in many clinical sites throughout the state, the nurse practitioners at Her Place will also include a comprehensive health assessment and preventive health plan at no additional cost. Women over the age of 65, who have Medicare, may also qualify for partial assistance.

For more information, contact Pat Camillo at (612) 624-3903 or beeper # 538-8749. For appointments, women can call the clinic at 672-2915.