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## Heart Station Broadens EKG Services

A lot of areas in the Hospital have been upgraded recently with the current renovation program, but the new appearance of the Heart Station didn't come about entirely through provisions made in the Planning Office.

Bright red smock coats for all the employees and attractive green and white cubicle drapes for the patient rooms are the result of a special study three of the department's technicians did for IBM Corporation. Mary Rigsbee, Virginia Blalock and Doris Bray made extra recordings of EKG's on electromagnetic tape and sent them off to New York. They received \$5 a tracing from IBM and a total of \$2,500 for the department.

In addition to the lab coats and curtains, their earnings enabled them to donate \$500 to the Medical Center's building fund.

This undertaking, however, is just the latest in a long line of successful projects initiated in the Heart Station over the past two years.

In April of 1970, Dr. Joseph C. Greenfield Jr., professor of medicine and assistant professor of physiology, became head of the department. Under his direction, a reorganization of the Heart Station was begun in an effort to improve the efficiency of handling its growing cardiogram load as well as to increase the capacity of its services.

Previously open from 8:30 to 5 Monday through Friday and half a day on Saturday, the station expanded its hours 18 months ago to complete coverage 24 hours of every day. "This makes for a significant improvement in patient care," Dr. Greenfield said.

To make round-the-clock services possible, two employees were added to the department, while Physicians' Associates and students worked as part-time employees on the night shift. The station now has a total of 13 full-time technicians and four part-time ones.



**IMPROVED CARDIOGRAM SERVICE--** Mary Rigsbee, chief technician in the Heart Station, records an electrocardiogram with one of the new \$4,000 machines responsible for the department's improved services. The machine not only records three leads at a time, but also requires no developing wait. The EKG was processed in less time that it took the photographer to snap this picture. (photo by Lewis Parrish)

The major part of the work of the Heart Station is recording electrocardiograms (EKG's). An EKG is a graphic tracing of the electric current produced by the contraction of the heart muscle or, more simply stated, a picture of the heart's action.

One of the key elements responsible for the station's faster and broader service is a new EKG machine, which records three leads at a time. From the moment a technician pushes the start button, it takes just 10 seconds to record an EKG.

The new machine is considered far superior to the old photographic one. It

not only enables the doctor to have his copy of the EKG immediately, but it is also much easier for the technician to operate. Because there is no developing wait, the entire process is speeded up and the need for darkroom space is eliminated.

The Heart Station has five of these 3-channel machines, one of which is kept in the Emergency Department. Each one cost close to \$4,000.

Another change in the department was the institution of a vector cardiography unit. A vectorcardiogram is a polaroid

(continued on page four)