

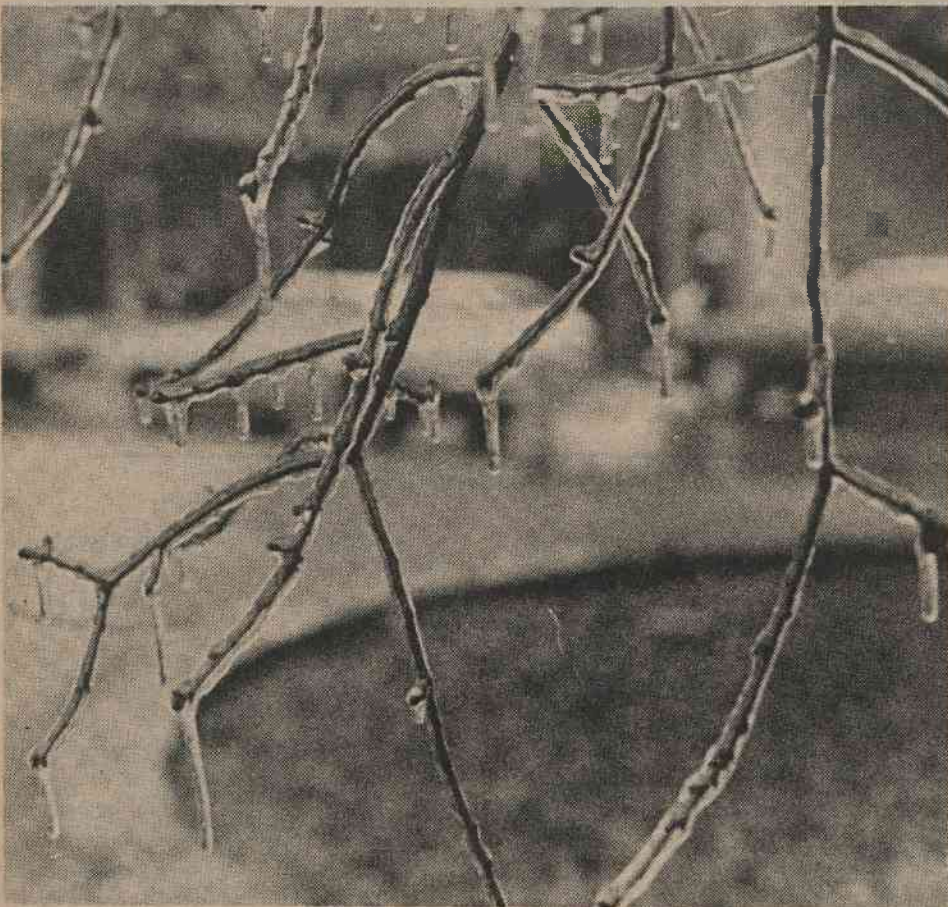
# Duke University Medical Center

# Intercom

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DURHAM, N.C.



**THE ICEPERSON CAMETH**—The weather forecast held a promise of snow, but what actually precipitated was ice and slush. Medical center personnel stayed inside, sipping warm beverages. Traffic was a little more jammed than usual in front of the hospital, as vehicles lined up to rescue discharged patients from the cold. One outpatient, seen scurrying with her umbrella to an appointment at Baker House was overheard to say, "It's so messy out I'd almost rather be an inpatient today." (Photo by Parker Herring)

## Duke scientists say proteins may mirror dystrophy defects

Scientists here have developed what they consider to be a useful model for studying the biochemical defects responsible for two of the most common forms of muscular dystrophy.

Their research indicates that proteins found in red blood cells taken from patients with Duchenne and myotonic muscular dystrophy seem to mirror abnormalities that may affect the muscles of those patients.

The discovery is important, according to Dr. Allen D. Roses, chief of neurology, because it provides researchers at Duke and elsewhere with a reliable, reproducible source of tissue for laboratory tests.

### Something to put in test tube

"The first need of a biochemist is to have something to put in his test tube to study," he said in an interview. "But you can't in all good conscience do repeated muscle biopsies on these patients."

A biopsy involves removing tissue from a living patient for medical evaluation and is more complicated and painful than simply drawing blood.

"What everyone has always done has been to say, 'Well, since we can't get muscle tissue from humans, let's study it in mice or chickens or some other

animal,'" Roses explained. "Unfortunately, there is no animal model that is truly representative of either Duchenne or myotonic muscular dystrophy."

### Most common type

Of the more than 40 types of the hereditary disease, Duchenne is the most severe, and myotonic is probably the most common, the scientist said. Neither can be cured.

The former (pronounced "du-SHEN") strikes boys, usually between the age of three and six, crippling and then killing them by their early twenties.

The latter affects both males and females of any age, he said. Sudden death from heart attack is one of its characteristics.

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## Communications specialist heads cancer control

Dr. Diane E. McGrath has been appointed director of cancer control at the Comprehensive Cancer Center, university Provost Frederic N. Cleaveland announced.

McGrath, a specialist in communication, will have overall responsibility for the center's public, patient and professional education programs, for media relations and publications, and for the center's toll-free telephone service for North Carolina.



**DR. McGRATH**

She will shape a unified cancer screening program at Duke. In addition, she will expand the cancer center's efforts to rehabilitate patients being treated for cancer, helping them resume their regular activities as quickly as possible.

The new director succeeds Dr. Donald S. Miller, who has entered private practice in Shelby.

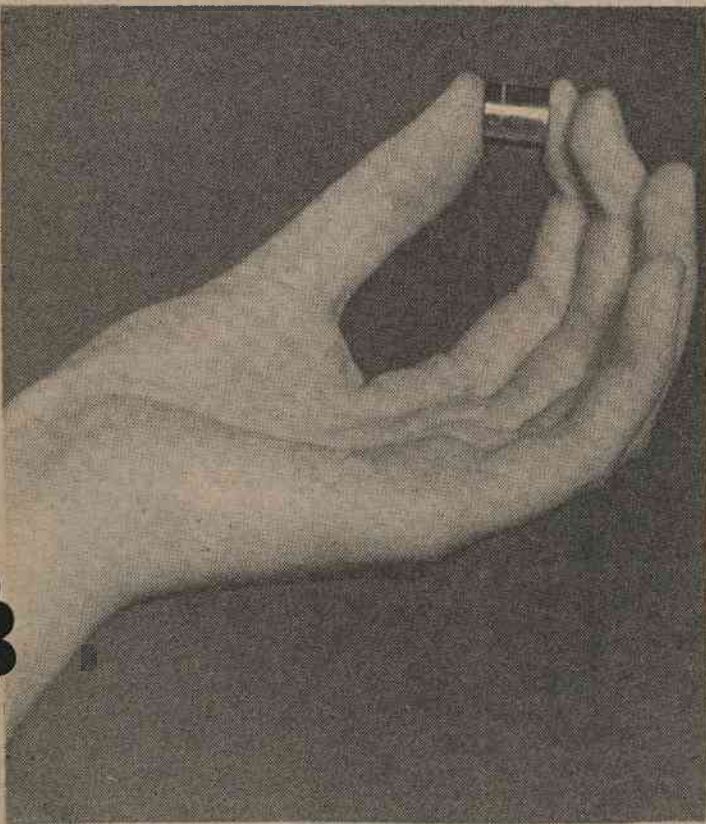
### Emphasis on professional education

"Our major function is getting information out to health professionals and the public about all aspects of the cancer problem," McGrath said.

We will have strong emphasis on professional education, including not only physicians but also nurses, nutritionists, physical therapists, pharmacists and others.

"But before we develop programs, we want to find out the educational needs of specific groups of professionals. We're not going to say, 'Here it is.' Instead, we're

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**TWO-TON BOX FOR HALF-INCH CYLINDER**—The two-ton cask shown being unloaded at the right, contains a cylinder measuring less than one-half inch and containing radioactive cobalt for use in cancer treatment. The photo above is of a non-radioactive dummy of the same size. So much shielding is needed because the tiny cylinder, the only one of its kind, is so "hot" with radioactivity. Prepared at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee and on loan to Duke for evaluation with patients, the new cobalt source will allow radiologists to aim their beam with greater accuracy than they can when using a larger source. It will be evaluated here by Drs. Lowell S. Miller and Fearghus O'Fogluudha, both professors of radiology at the Comprehensive Cancer Center. (Photo by William Erwin and Sally Herndon)

