

# County's Inmate Health Care Plan Hoping To Cut Expenses

BY TERRY POPE

A new program that begins on a probationary status this month will send Brunswick County Health Department nurses to jail—not on charges, but on duty.

Brunswick County paid more than \$35,000 in medical bills for inmates who spent time in its jail last year.

The goal of the new program is to provide limited care for minor or common health problems for inmates at the newly-expanded Brunswick County Jail while cutting medical expenses for prisoners during a tight budget year.

Public health nurses certified in adult health assessment will operate the clinic on specified days.

"The inmate population is rising, and so are our health concerns," said Pat Nutter, a nurse who serves on the Brunswick County Board of Health.

Ms. Nutter and two other board members, Dr. Brad Williams and Dr. Bill Phillips, developed the inmate health care plan.

County Board of Commissioners Chairman Kelly Holden likes the

idea of treating inmates at the jail, which is located at the government complex in Bolivia. It was he who asked the health board to consider creating the program.

In the past, inmates who needed medical treatment were transported by at least two sheriff's deputies to participating doctors at The Brunswick Hospital in Supply. It has gotten to be an expensive practice, said Health Director Michael Rhodes.

At its May meeting, the health board unanimously adopted the program on a six-month probationary status to begin June 1.

"We want to see how it works, how much money we can save the county," Rhodes said. "Also, we want to see how much more efficient the service will be for the sheriff's department."

A public health nurse will be assigned to the jail on Mondays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. except for the second Thursday of each month. In the second week, a nurse will visit the jail on Fridays from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

If the health department is closed for a holiday, or if the nursing staff is short due to vacations or sick

leave, the service will not be available. The nurses must leave the public health clinic to treat prisoners, but patients at the health department will still be of top priority.

"The clinic work must come first," said Ms. Nutter. "The inmate service is secondary."

At other times, or during emergencies, the jailer must seek medical care for inmates from private physicians or at the hospital emergency room.

Conditions beyond a nurse's scope of practice, regulated by the N.C. Nurse Practice Act, will be referred to a physician, medical consultant or the inmate's private physician.

The program also features infection control measures for the nursing staff.

Inmates with infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, chicken pox or flu, will be housed in a room with a closed door and will not mix with the general jail population as long as the condition persists.

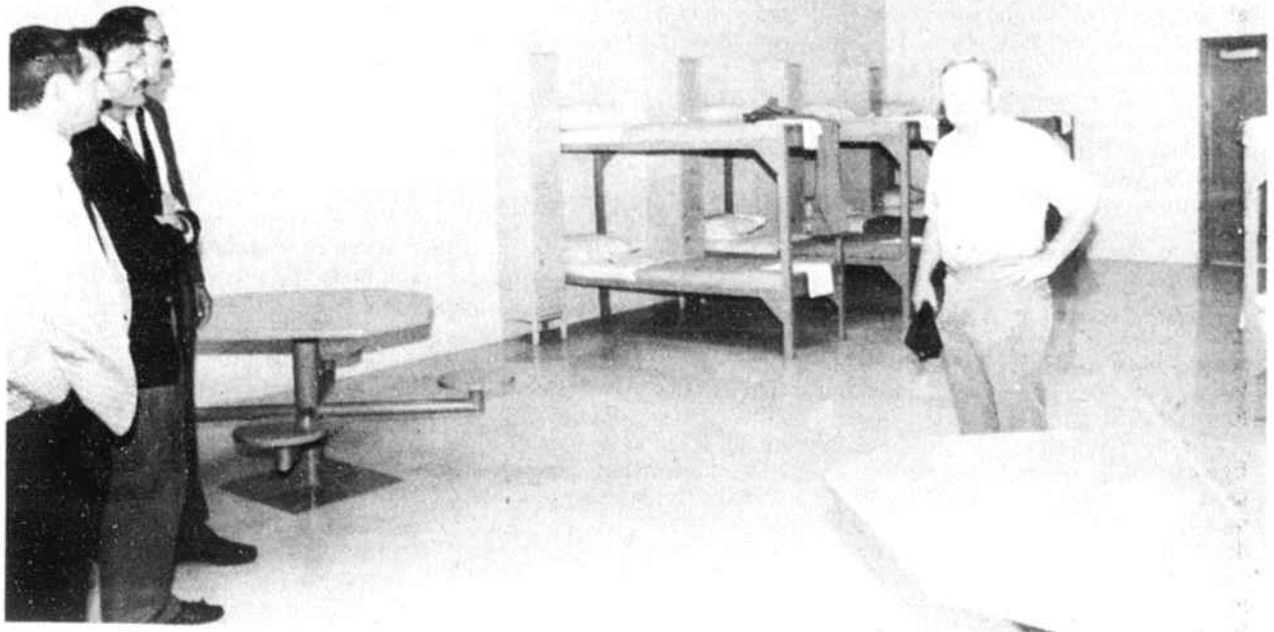
Those with a disease transmitted by blood or body fluids, such as AIDS or hepatitis B, will not be iso-

lated, but universal precautions will be observed by the nursing staff.

Such precautions require that

nurses wear gloves, masks and protective eyewear when treating patients or when handling blood or

body fluids. It also outlines procedures for the careful removal of soiled clothing or equipment.



BRUNSWICK COUNTY Sheriff John Carr Davis, right, gives county officials a tour of the new jail addition that opened last week. The opening coincides with a new county inmate health care plan. Also pictured are, from left, Commissioner Gene Pinkerton, County Manager David Clegg and Commissioner Kelly Holden.

## Growing Patient List Gets Screening First

A county clinic that screens for diseases must begin screening its list of patients first.

Starting in July, several changes will go into effect at the Brunswick County Health Department's growing adult health clinic.

Health Director Michael Rhodes said more than 700 persons were served last year by the clinic, which offers screening for cancer, cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes to persons ages 18 to 65.

The screening clinics are designed to help detect early signs of diseases by offering an exam to patients every two years.

However, approximately 56.8 percent of those seeking "screening" at the clinic are already under routine medical care. An estimated 48.9 percent are already under treatment for their conditions, he said.

A high demand for the clinic results in a six- to 12-month waiting waiting period for an appointment. Nurses find themselves "screening"

for a diagnosed condition, said Rhodes.

"We believe this is not only pointless, but a waste of time and resources," he said.

The department will begin charging a screening fee on a sliding scale based on the patient's income and family size. If approved by commissioners, fees will begin at \$29.34, the same charged by other health departments in the state, said Rhodes. The proposed fees have already been approved by the county board of health.

The program will now include community outreach activities for persons 70 or older two afternoons per month and an adult health education program in the clinic.

Clinic hours are from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month and from 8 a.m. to noon on the second and fourth Wednesday.

## Lakes Man Hurt After Deer Hits Motorcycle

A deer crossing N.C. 87 near Boiling Spring Lakes was struck by a motorcycle last week, throwing the driver off and seriously injuring him.

Dan Eric Dewease, 26, of Boiling Spring Lakes, was driving his 1983 Honda about 1.6 miles north of the town limits when the deer ran out in front of him, reported State Trooper J.V. Dove.

The accident happened last Wednesday, May 29, around 4 p.m.

"It would have been a minor accident, except the driver was seriously injured when he struck the pavement," said Ruby Oakley, a spokesperson for the N.C. Highway Patrol office in Wilmington.

Dewease was taken to Doshier Memorial Hospital in Southport for treatment.

He was later charged by Dove with driving without a North Carolina driver's license.

Damage was listed at \$800 to the motorcycle.

### Sign Damaged

In another accident last Thursday, May 30, a Shallotte man was charged with driving while impaired and driving while his license was revoked after he ran off of U.S. 17 south of Shallotte and struck a sign.

Jerry David Vaught, 44, was charged after his 1978 Cadillac ran

off the road around 10:15 p.m. about 11 miles south of Shallotte, reported Dove.

Vaught's car ran off the right shoulder and hit a sign owned by Morgan Enterprises of Shallotte.

The driver was not injured, but damage was estimated at \$500 to the car and \$200 to the sign.

### Car Hits Trailer

A 21-year-old Camp Lejeune man was seriously injured last Tuesday, May 28, when his car struck a pickup truck pulling a utility trailer on U.S. 17 south of Shallotte.

Yuri Rickenbaker was traveling north on U.S. 17 about seven miles south of Shallotte when the 1:40 p.m. wreck occurred, reported Trooper B.D. Barnhardt.

Rickenbaker's 1988 Pontiac ran off the road, swerved back onto the pavement, crossed the center line and struck a 1984 Ford truck and utility trailer, Barnhardt stated.

The driver of the truck, Billy Mack Hollingsworth, 53, of Supply, was not injured.

Rickenbaker was charged with careless and reckless driving and taken to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply.

Damage was estimated at \$6,000 to Rickenbaker's car and \$5,000 to the Hollingsworth truck and utility trailer.

## One Charged With Taking Safe With \$23,000

BY TERRY POPE

Brunswick County sheriff's detectives are still searching for \$23,000 that was inside a safe stolen from a Winnabow home on May 8.

However, one man has been arrested and charged with the crime.

Dan Delichous Galloway Jr., 24, of Winnabow, has been charged with breaking and entering and larceny and larceny of a firearm, reported Det. Ken Messer of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

Galloway is accused of breaking into a home and taking the safe that contained both the money and a 9mm pistol, said Messer.

"It is still under investigation," Messer said. "We feel like there's another subject involved."

Galloway was placed under \$40,000 bond and was still being held in the Brunswick County Jail Monday morning.

In other reports on file at the sheriff's department:

Messer believes a Winnabow man who was shot in the face Sunday evening pulled the trigger himself. The man suffered a single gunshot wound to the left cheek.

According to Deputy Becky Mc-

### CRIME REPORT

Donald's report, the man's grandmother was home when she heard a shot. She told deputies he then walked from the bedroom and asked her to call for help. The Town Creek Volunteer Rescue Squad transported the victim to New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington.

"All evidence points toward a self-inflicted gunshot," said Messer, who stated the victim had been depressed.

Two men entered Holiday Beverage and Sporting Goods in Belville Saturday evening and fled with some firearms tucked inside one of the men's shirt. According to Deputy Randy Robinson, one man distracted a sales clerk while another suspect picked the lock on a gun case, dismantled the guns and stuffed them inside his shirt. They fled the store around 8 p.m.

Someone helped themselves to a load of watermelons and other vegetables early Sunday at Ocean Isle Produce. The suspect broke through a door when the stand was closed and carried away 10 watermelons, 10 cantaloupes, two boxes of tomat-

oes, two baskets of peaches, 12 soft drinks, two boxes of blueberries and one case of corn, all valued at \$296, reported Deputy Phil Bryant.

Food valued at \$236 was taken during a break-in at the Causeway Grill at Holden Beach Friday night. The suspect entered by pulling open a window. A ham, several cans of sauce, scallops, hamburger, cooking oil and dishwashing detergent were taken, reported Deputy Charlie Crocker.

A burglar took about \$1,800 during a break-in at the Maco Light Restaurant on U.S. 74-76 in Maco, reported Deputy Richard DuVall. The suspect broke the glass on a front door and entered between midnight and 7 a.m. Friday. Two cartons of cigarettes were also taken. Damage was estimated at \$350.

An estimated 93 tobacco plants were destroyed by someone riding through a field on Goose Neck Road in the Northwest Community, reported Robinson. Tire tracks indicate a four-wheel all-terrain vehicle was driven through the field.

An air conditioner was removed from a home in Old Mill Mobile Home Park in Leland Saturday to allow entry inside, but nothing was

taken by the burglar that ransacked the home, reported Deputy Brian Sanders.

A diamond ring valued at \$3,500 was stolen from a Sunset Harbor home Sunday while the victim was out of town, reported Sgt. Ida Ballard.

Baby clothes, a waterbed pad, rods and reels and video recorder were among the items taken from a Sandy Bluff home Saturday, reported Deputy Richard Long. Damage was estimated at \$100 after a front door had been pried open.

Someone tried to enter a Carolina Shores Resort home last Thursday by removing the screens to two windows and cutting the screen on a third, but they never made it inside the home, reported Deputy Robert Hoagland. Damage was estimated at \$350.

The back glass to a pickup truck was shot out and the front windshield damaged on Little Macedonia Road near Supply Saturday, Long reported. Damage was listed at \$300.

A home on N.C. 179 near Brickland sustained fire damage Sunday when a man fell asleep while smoking a cigarette, reported Bryant. No injuries were reported.

## Building Owner Given Month To Fix Septic System

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County health officials have given the owner of a commercial building near Ocean Isle Beach one month to repair a failing septic system.

Betty Gore owns the two-story building on N.C. 179 west of Ocean Isle that is being used for a convenience store on the first floor and a nightclub, Cowgirls, on the second floor.

Health officials concluded last week that the septic system serving the building has failed when they saw sewage coming to the surface, said John Crowder, environmental health supervisor with the county health department.

Crowder said health officials also noticed red dye on the ground surface during an on-site inspection last Wednesday. The health depart-

ment had added a concentrated red dye to the septic system about three weeks ago.

A notice of violation was mailed to the owner of the building last Friday giving her 30 days to repair the system, Crowder said.

If the system is repaired, it would not be the first time. Crowder said the county health department helped the owner design a repair of the system two or three years ago.

This time around, the county has recommended Mrs. Gore hire someone to come up with a plan for repairing the system. Crowder said the current system employs a septic tank, pump and conventional drain field.

"The system they have there now takes up a good part of the area that's green area or area available for sewage disposal," Crowder said

Tuesday.

The businesses will be permitted to operate while a plan for repairing the system is being developed. State sewage guidelines allow property owners to continue using their systems while they work out an improvement plan.

Crowder said failing septic systems are not that rare in this area. The county health department is presently keeping tabs on six violations.

Although septic systems have failed at restaurants, motels and other types of businesses, Crowder said "the great majority of them are individual residences."

Besides working with the county on repairing the septic system, Mrs. Gore also is working with the Town of Ocean Isle Beach on correcting violations of the state building code.

Building Inspector Druied Robertson said the owner will have to install a sprinkler system and add an exit and lighted exit signs on the second floor to comply with state code.

The owner also will have to run a conduit to an outdoor flashing light and have the balcony inspected. Robertson said Tuesday he had not yet received a timetable for the proposed improvements.

*I wish to express my appreciation for the warmth, concern and personal support shown to me by my family of friends, patients and colleagues during my recent illness.*

*I apologize for any inconvenience my brief absence may have caused. I have now returned to my practice full time and expect no further interruption in patient care.*

Sincerely,

Marcus Rey Williams, MD

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