

School clinics

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really needed," said William Privett, Catholic Charities' director for the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry. "We also developed a curriculum that deals with adolescent sexuality and implemented it in the schools. We have a long history together."

Despite what opponents of the clinics considered a victory, a clinic located at Franklin Junior/Senior High School is accomplishing much of what the original proposal set out to do.

One of three city schools that has housed a health demonstration project for the past four years, Franklin's clinic offers students free physicals for work permits and athletics. The project is administered by Threshold.

According to a Franklin student, clinic staff members "tell you about birth control and then they contact you through their main clinic."

"They keep it private," the student added. "It's accepted pretty well among the students."

"The project's focus is to provide access to health care. Primarily they offer physicals for work permits and sports participation and assess kids for acute illnesses as it is part of a work or athletics physical," Handwerker said. "They do ask questions about pregnancy, sexual activity, family life, and drug or alcohol use."

Parental consent is required for students to be enrolled at the Franklin clinic, Handwerker added, and parents may sign their children up to receive routine health services at the school. Other types of treatment are referred to the family's physician or to other agencies.

The school board has asked the superintendent for a report on the demonstration projects, according to Hedding. "I was not aware that the demonstration project was in effect," she said.

Padilla said she was aware of the services offered by Threshold's clinic at Franklin High School.

"I don't think it's out of line that students be given the proper information on which to base their decisions on what it is they want to do," she said.

Some researchers have contended that making birth control available increases teen pregnancies and abortions, according to Privett. "There is no data on the impact of school health clinics on teen pregnancy rates or rates of abortion," he said. Clinics like the Maternal and Infant Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, track only the numbers of live births to teens.

"Given their level of maturity, it is unlikely that teens will be faithful users of birth control," he said. Pointing out that adults needed a law to be persuaded to wear seat belts, he asked why teenagers should be

expected to act any more responsibly.

"Parental consent would be a key issue," Privett said. "The approach in St. Paul is for parents to sign a blanket consent form for students to use the clinic in the fall. That way, parents would have no idea whether their kids were prescribed birth control or not. I have serious problems with that."

"The St. Paul clinic is just one example," Handwerker said. "There are a lot of different models that have seen great success ... We would either develop a new model or

base ours on another model. An innovative approach would be more likely to be funded," she added.

The clinics would depend on self-referrals and on referrals from parents and teachers, Handwerker said.

School board members expect to see a formal proposal sometime in September or October, according to Padilla.

"We were told by the superintendent that

when the proposal was developed, it would come back to the board for review," she said.

Although details of the new proposal are sketchy, Privett said he is concerned about the same set of principles he defended in 1981.

"No program in this community should lead to increased teenage sexual intimacy," he said. "The family's role and values need to be primary and they need to be respected."

Clinics' success said to be based on incomplete data

School-based health clinics, including a pioneer program in St. Paul, Minn., are being hailed for their success in reducing the number of pregnancies among teen-agers.

Nearly 34 adolescent health-care projects have been established in 17 cities across the country, according to an April, 1986, report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

But advocates and critics of the clinics alike agree with Asta M. Kenney that "solid data on the health impact of these clinics are scarce."

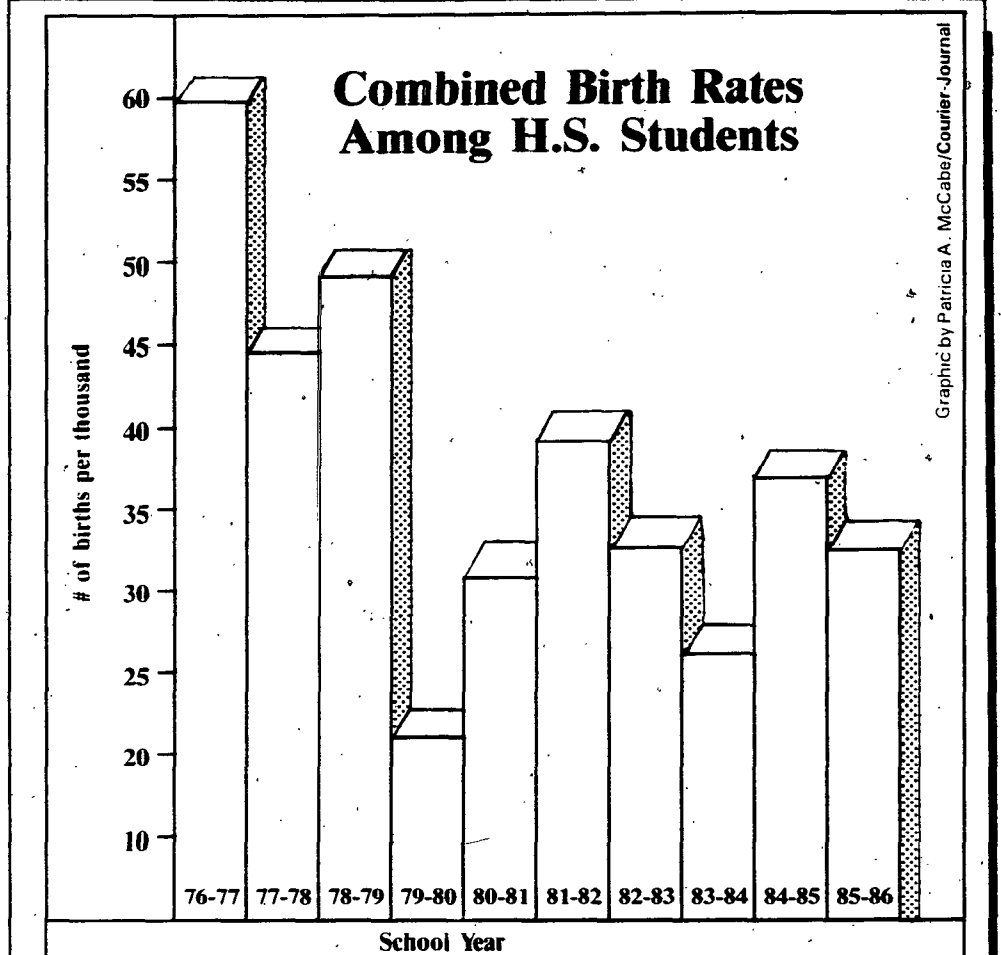
Reporting on the second annual conference on school-based clinics held in Chicago last October, Kenney, an associate for policy development with the Alan Guttmacher Institute, wrote that the birthrate among students in St. Paul schools with clinics declined 22 percent from 1976/77 to 1984/85. Whether the decline was due to fewer pregnancies or increased reliance on abortions "could not be discerned," she added, because the St. Paul program only keeps statistics on the number of teenagers who give birth, not on the number of pregnancies. Kenney's article was published in the January/February issue of *Family Planning Perspectives*.

Use of the St. Paul clinics' family-planning services increased from 7 percent of all the school's female students in 1976 to 35 percent in 1984. Among those who enroll in the program, 91 percent reportedly continue to use birth control 12 months later. Eighteen percent of the female students who in the program are said to have enrolled before they began having intercourse.

While clinic supporters interpret those statistics to mean that the most sexually active teens are receiving needed services, critics charge that the clinics actually increase sexual activity among teens by encouraging and legitimizing the use of birth control.

A pioneer in the field of school-based health clinics, the St. Paul Maternal and Infant Center was established in 1972. Since then, clinics have been established in three additional St. Paul schools.

About one-third of the 32,000 students who visit the clinics each year receive general health evaluations, including nutritional counseling, according to Ann Ricketts, administrator of the project. Another third receive counseling and other social services, and the final third



The Maternal and Infant Center program has decreased the overall number of births to teens in four in St. Paul, Minn., schools. But the clinics do not keep statistics on the number of pregnancies or abortions, according to Ann Ricketts, program administrator. Ricketts attributes fluctuations in the rate of births to several factors, including the addition of new schools to the program, and an influx of Southeast Asian students, whose birthrate is higher than average.

are treated for reproductive health — from family planning to sexually transmitted diseases.

In addition to self-referrals by students, referrals to the clinic are made by the school nurse, teachers, friends, coaches and social workers with concerns ranging from personal hygiene to child abuse. "A lot of parents send their children to the clinic," Ricketts said.

Before any student can visit the clinic, his or her parent must sign a consent form. Family planning, referrals for birth control, pregnancy and prenatal care are only provided to students whose parents have filed consent forms, Ricketts said.

Additional consent is obtained from parents for any treatment the student receives that is non-confidential. "If a student came in for a pregnancy test, for instance, we would not let the parent know without the consent of the student," Ricketts explained. The same is true of treatment for sexually transmitted diseases.

Students are encouraged to discuss their de-

isions on contraception with parents, but staff members do not inform parents that their children are receiving family planning counseling or referral unless the student agrees.

"The majority of students do inform their parents about family-planning counseling," Ricketts said. "It's very rare, but if a parent says they don't want their kids to be in the clinic, we respect their wishes."

"We don't provide abortion referrals," Ricketts said. "Nor do we tell parents. We do try to make sure the student is talking to some adult."

The clinics have cost nearly \$3 million in current dollars over 14 years of operation, Ricketts said. Each school clinic is staffed by a full-time medical assistant, who carries out lab work, and a social worker, responsible for outreach. Part-time staff include a nurse practitioner, an obstetrician/gynecologist, a pediatrician and pediatric nurse, and counselors in health education and nutrition.

Sponsors sought for families to attend single-parent camp

Sponsors are needed to provide scholarships for families attending single-parent family camp, August 24-30, at Camp Stella Maris on Conesus Lake.

Garson Meyer dinner dance set

A dinner dance will be held on Thursday, August 21, from 4:30 to 8 p.m. at the Garson Meyer Senior Center, 177 N. Clinton Ave.

There will be a roast beef dinner and music, provided by the Joe Cady Orchestra. Wine and cheese will be served at 4:30 and dinner will begin at 5 p.m.

Tickets are \$7.50 per person and may be obtained by calling (716) 454-3224.

'Friendly' volunteers needed

The Visiting Nurse Service has a new volunteer program serving home-bound elderly residents of the northwest area of Monroe County.

To volunteer, call (716) 482-0120.

Day of prayer for women set at diocesan retreat house

A day of prayer for women has been scheduled for Tuesday, August 13, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Notre Dame Diocesan Retreat House in Canandaigua.

The topic for the program is "Ministry:

Families are accepted at the camp, sponsored by the Ministry to the Separated, Divorced, Bereaved and Remarried, regardless of their ability to pay. Any individual, parish or organization interested in helping to subsidize the cost of the camp should contact Angie Gallo at the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry, (716) 546-4894.

Cenacle Center schedules individually-directed retreats

A retreat at the Cenacle Center for Spiritual Renewal for individuals wishing to deepen their relationships with God has been scheduled for August 14 through 23. The fee is \$150 for the full eight days or \$20 per day.

For information or reservations, contact the Cenacle Ministry Office, 693 East Ave., Rochester, 14607, or call (716) 271-8755.

You May Be Into More Ministry Than You Realize." The cost for the program is \$6, which includes lunch.

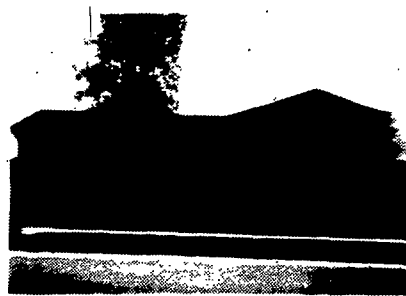
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