

Lighten Up! program helps students improve lifestyles

LUCY ARNOLD Staff Writer

The unassuming office of USC's Health and Wellness Programs is tucked away in the basement of the Thompson Student Health Center where it remains ready to provide any of its services to students.

"(Health and Wellness Programs) educated the students on how to lead more healthy lifestyles," said Terri Aravey, staff assistant at Health and Wellness Programs.

The office provides a combination of students and professional health educators to fill the needs of students at USC. Open Door, a student organization, is involved in one on one consultation at the office.

At the Drop-In Center, students can check their height and weight, percent body fat, and blood pressure. Consultation and literature are available on quitting smoking, weight management, fitness, stress management, nutrition and other health issues. Drop

in at the Drop-In Center between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Students can LIGHTEN UP! at Health and Wellness Programs by joining the new program which aims for life-long health, rather than temporary weight loss. It is a self-paced plan which integrates nutrition, exercise and other healthy behavior into a college student's life.

"It's an education program that teaches you how to eat," Aravey said.

LIGHTEN UP! costs \$10 for students with all fees paid and \$15 for students with unpaid fees. This one-time charge includes a manual and a tee-shirt for those who complete the program.

Students can also have their cholesterol level checked at a lower cost than would be charged in a community.

The Office of Sexual Assault Programs and Services was added to

Health and Wellness Programs in 1993 in response to student concern over sexual assault issues. The office coordinates USC's response to sexual assault, and also educates the university community about, rape and gender issues.

"There was a rising awareness of (Sexual assault) problems all over the county," Aravey said.

Anyone who has been a victim of sexual assault may request confidential assistant from the staff at the office of Sexual Assault Programs and Services by calling 77-8248 or 777-7619.

Aside from these constant services offered at Health and Wellness Programs, special events are sponsored throughout the year. They sponsored Condom Awareness Week in February and, in the fall, will sponsor the Fitness Fest.

Open Door students are an important group of educators at Health and

Wellness Programs.

"They are specially trained to health and wellness issues," said Lisa Mohn, director of Health and Wellness Programs.

Peer Health Educators are involved with the Drop-In Center as well as the LIGHTEN UP! program. They also staff the special events during the year. These students are specifically trained in nutrition, fitness, cholesterol, stress and weight management issues.

The Peer Sexuality Educators focus on making presentations to student groups who request information on safer sex, contraception, STDs and relationships. They undergo weekend training which teaches them more about these issues and how to present them to a group.

A new student group formed last semester to address the issues of eating disorders among college students. P.E.E.R.S (Promoting, Educating, and

Encouraging Realistic Self-image) give presentation on body image, food issues and self-esteem.

"This is the first year (P.E.E.R.S) has been in existence," Mohn said. "One component of it is the speaker's bureau. Another component is the Sorority Advocates, because people in sororities are at greater risk for eating disorders."

CARE (Creating Attitudes for Rape-free Environment) peer educators also make presentations to students groups. They discuss relationships expectations, communication problems and risk reduction techniques. They also let students know where they can get help if they need it. CARE educators work with the Office of Sexual Assault Programs and Services.

For more information about Health and Wellness Programs, call 777-8248 or visit the office in the basement of the Thomson Student Health Center.

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