

# Up Close and Personal

JENNIFER HANSEN Asst. Features Editor

"Why is it that girls get their own center?" a male sophomore said. It is not a matter of discrimination that females have a specific clinic dedicated to their needs. Women need a private, efficient place for their personal health problems to be taken care of quickly and confidentially.

Aside from the obvious physical aspects, emotionally females have a variety of problems, questions and concerns that cannot be addressed by a general physician. A separate facility for women at the Thomson Student Health Center prevents overcrowding and allows emergency cases to be handled quickly. "It is much busier downstairs (in the regular center). It would be very hectic if there were only one center," Women's Care secretary Anita Ghaffar said.

Dr. Bill Boggs, a licensed gynecologist, oversees the operation of the Women's Center. He has been practicing at USC women's care for the past 10 years. The newest addition to the staff is Dr. Bill Carpenter, who has been on full-time staff at the center since October. Also on staff is one nurse practitioner, three nursing assistants and a secretary.

Boggs said, "It is very hard for general medicine to keep up as far as changes in technology and the medical field, such as birth control. Most universities see the need for separate facilities."

Previously, students complained about the wait for appointments, which was sometimes three to four weeks. The center presently sees about 30 or 40 patients per day and is available for emergency cases. "We were very backed up before, but then we got this new gynecologist, and now we can get patients in today and tomorrow," Ghaffar said.

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wasn't able to do before, such as follow-ups on abnormal pap smears, something that needs a medical procedure, which we would have previously had to refer the patient elsewhere for. Now we can do it right here — and for half the price of a private practice," Boggs said.

According to Boggs, the Women's Care Clinic is accredited by the AAAC, which is a national association that evaluates public clinics, such as those in universities. Both doctors are licensed gynecologists and ran their own private offices before coming to USC. "We practice good medicine," Boggs said.

Students seem pleased with the services and staff provided by the center. According to the 1995 Patient Satisfaction Survey, the overall quality measure indicated 78.8 percent of surveyed students perceived the quality of medical care to be "Above Average" or "Excellent."

The center provides several services to college students, including free routine exams to full-time students. There is a full line of family planning services from birth control and contraceptives to counseling. The center specializes in the

treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and urinary tract infections. Counseling and information is provided to patients dealing with unplanned pregnancies. Fertility evaluation is available for couples. A nurse practitioner answers questions during the hours of operation.

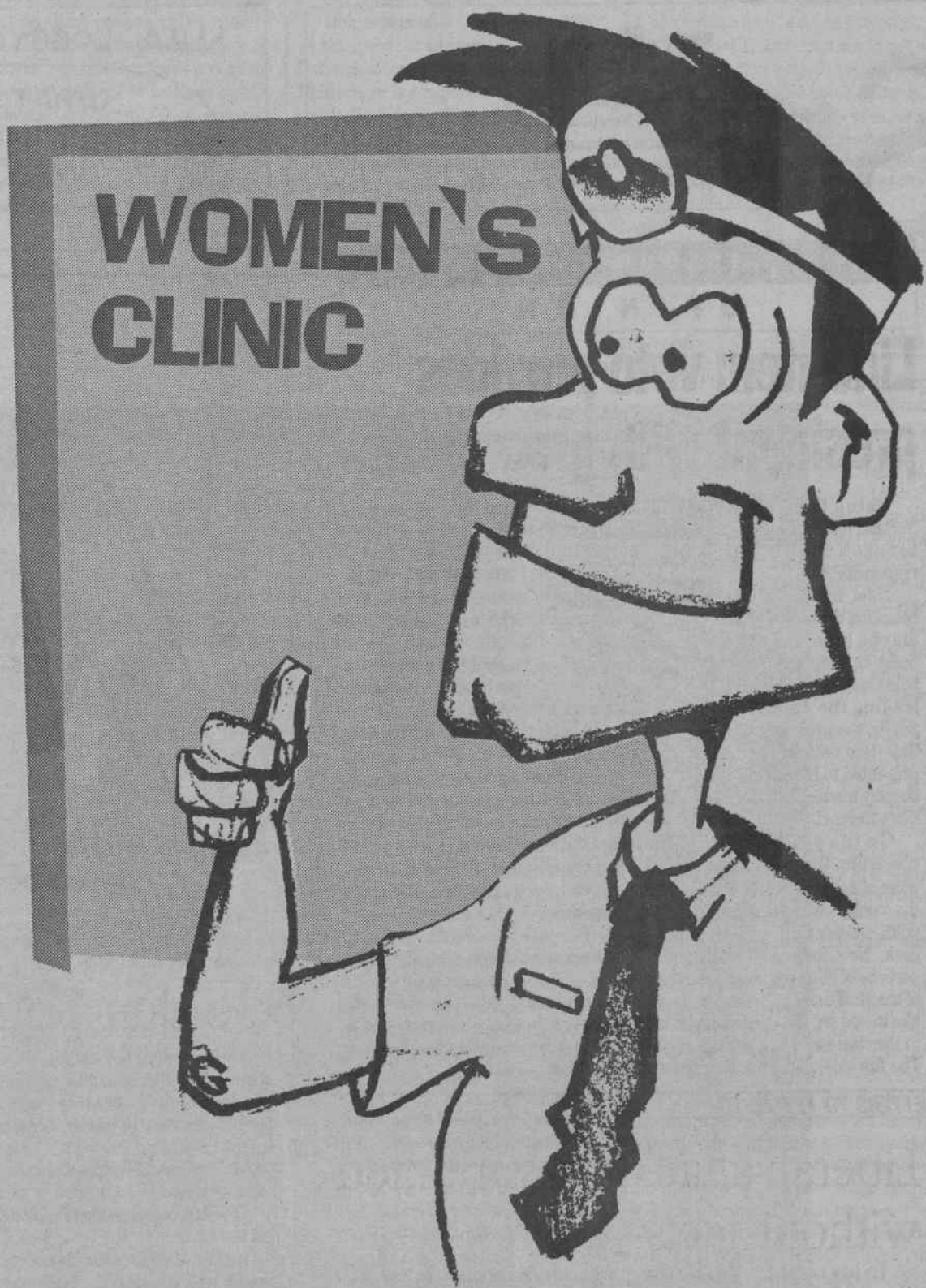
"The center has all the same services and care as a private obstetrician/gynecologist; the big difference is in price of bills and medicines," Boggs said. The center is unique in that the staff is more attuned to college students and their needs. "I think we understand what goes through their minds a little better than they would in a private office downtown," Boggs said.

"The center looks at women's care from an overall standpoint — family planning, birth control; we look at the overall issues — present preventative measures for STDs and unplanned pregnancies. We talk about how to prevent these problems," Boggs said.

The staff tries to develop a rapport with the patients and make them feel as comfortable as possible. "We do everything here, take care of our girls; we keep things private and try to give the girls the attention they need," Ghaffar said.

Although the center sees more than 30 patients each day, the staff feels there are many students who do not even know about the services provided. "We see people here every day that say they never even knew that we were here," Boggs said. The center has been open since 1973 and has grown steadily each year in the number of patients that come in. "I would like to see more students become aware of our services," Boggs said.

The Women's Care Clinic is located on the fourth floor of the Thomson Student Health Center and is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Hours will be available for students during the summer sessions.



## SELF-DEFENSE FOR WOMEN

PHYSICAL SKILLS

STRATEGIES

**When:** Thursday, April 11, 1996  
6:00 - 9:30 p.m.

**Where:** Blatt P.E. Center,  
Hospitality Room

**Cost:** Free

**Register:** by Wednesday, April 10th with the Office of Sexual Assault Services, 777-8248. Space is available on a first-come first-served basis. Class size is limited to 20 women so register early!

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