

# Watsonville Hospital plans lab for doing angiograms

By LANE WALLACE

Watsonville Community Hospital plans to open a lab for heart catheterization, a procedure which allows doctors to perform angiograms to pinpoint blockages in coronary arteries.

The lab, which would be the only one of its kind in Santa Cruz or Monterey counties, will cost \$891,000 and could be ready as soon as this summer.

The hospital last week applied to the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development for approval. That agency can approve the application without holding hearings and should reach a decision by April.

"We have the full range of cardiac care services with the exception of a catheterization lab," said Sharon Scott, director of planning and development at the hospital.

The angiogram procedure involves delivering an opaque "dye" to the arteries in the region of the heart. This is done through a small opening in

either the arm or upper inner leg; the catheter, a tiny, hollow tube which carries the dye, is inserted and passed through the blood vessel to the region of the heart. The doctor (and patient) is actually able to see on a screen the blood coursing through the heart, and spot interruptions in the flow.

The angiogram helps doctors determine whether the patient needs a heart bypass operation or treatment with a procedure using the balloon technique known as angioplasty.

Watsonville Hospital has no plans for a heart surgery unit, Mrs. Scott said.

"A lot of times non-invasive tests (such as treadmill tests) are not specific enough" for pinpointing blockages, said Dr. Thomas Murphy, a cardiologist who has a local office and practices at Watsonville Community Hospital.

Dr. Murphy said there are two uses for catheterization — locating blockages by inserting dye,

and in treatment of a heart condition by inserting the drug streptokinase to thin the blood. Watsonville's application does not call for use of the blood-thinning technique, but the procedure could be added at a later date, Mrs. Scott said.

Murphy and Miguel Vasquez are the only cardiologists qualified to use these techniques who regularly practice at Watsonville Hospital. Mrs. Scott said she expects doctors from Santa Cruz to use the catheterization lab.

A study done in 1981 showed that 419 people from Santa Cruz County were hospitalized for heart catheterization, most of them at Sequoia Hospital in Redwood City and hospitals in San Jose.

Watsonville Community Hospital is working out affiliation agreements with O'Connor and Good Samaritan hospitals in San Jose and Sequoia Hospital. "They all worked with us" on the application, said Mrs. Scott.