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Bishop considers allowing birth-control procedure at hospital

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The new bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Monterey hopes to decide by the end of summer whether doctors can provide tubal ligations as a birth-control measure at Dominican Hospital in Santa Cruz.

That word is being relayed to Santa Cruz County supervisors today by the head of the county Health Service Agency. Supervisors have been concerned about the unavailability of tubal ligations for women, particularly for poorer patients unable to leave town for private hospitals. Do-

minican bought AMI Community Hospital in Santa Cruz two years ago and eliminated the birth-control procedure from there as well.

Although the previous bishop heading the Monterey Diocese refused to give Dominican the nod to allow tubal ligations, Bishop Sylvester Ryan "has taken a

thoughtful and open-minded approach to this issue," according to the hospital's top administrator, who was quoted in a letter to supervisors from Elinor Hall, chief of the county health agency.

Hall's letter says that Sister Ju-

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lie Hyer, head administrator at the hospital, believes that Ryan "has moved relatively quickly in view of the fact that he has only been appointed as bishop for two months."

During his brief tenure, Hall wrote to supervisors, Bishop Ryan has reviewed material submitted to his predecessor and has also discussed the issue with an ethicist.

Catholic doctrine forbids many of the commonly available reproductive services,

Dominican spokeswoman Penny Jacobi agreed Monday that Ryan hopes to decide by the end of summer.

Before deciding on the procedure, Ryan wants to check with the priests in his area, Hall said.

Hall noted that the Santa Cruz Medical Clinic has received certification from the state to provide tubal ligations to Medi-Cal patients but has had scheduling problems that have created "the unhappy experience" for some women who have seen their Medi-Cal eligibility expire before they could have the procedure at the clinic.