

Elderly, Handicapped

Dominican Begins Lifeline Service

Lifeline, an emergency response system, has been installed by Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital to enable senior citizens, the handicapped and persons recovering from serious illness to live independently at home without worrying they will be unable to obtain aid in case of an emergency.

The Lifeline system centers around a wireless signaling device carried by the Lifeline subscriber at home. The device may be worn around the neck or attached to clothing. Pressing a button on the unit triggers a digital communicator attached to the subscriber's telephone. The communicator automatically calls the Emergency Response Center at Dominican, and, by means of a coded number system, tells the hospital who triggered the signal.

The hospital then checks the subscriber's card, which gives the name and telephone number of two friends designated by the subscriber. One is contacted and goes to check on the Lifeline subscriber. He or she notifies the hospital of the subscriber's condition. If it is warranted, emergency assistance is on its way within minutes of the initial signal.

If neither of the subscriber's friends can answer the hospital's call, the police are notified of the subscriber's emergency signal for help.

In the case of a person being incapacitated and unable to manually trigger the system, there is a timer which must be reset each 12 hours. If it is not reset, the system itself triggers the signal for help. Therefore, a person should not be left alone more than 12 hours in the most extreme case.

Dominican bought the Lifeline system for \$15,150. To underwrite additional call units, which cost \$425 each, Lifeline subscribers are charged a nominal rental fee, which can be paid monthly, quarterly or annually. Arrangements may be made for those who cannot afford fees.

Individuals and organizations are being encouraged to underwrite the cost of additional units so that eligible applicants may take part in the program.

For more information, call 476-0220, extension 1634.

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