

Sentinel

Tuesday, November 16, 1976

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Santa Cruz County Is Close To VD Epidemic

If Santa Cruz County is not actually in the throes of a venereal disease epidemic, "we're damn close to it," says Dr. Joseph Craig, County Health Officer.

To remedy that situation, which is growing alarmingly among the 13-17-year-old school population, county and state health officials have scheduled a workshop for local teachers Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Dream Inn.

One teacher from each high school and junior high in the county will attend the workshop, to be led by Earl Johnson of the state Department of Education. Assisting him will be several specialized instructors, Dr. Craig, and Dr. Larry Edler of the County Office of Education.

The focus, reports Dr. Edler, will be on setting up a counseling program or a curriculum unit on what health and education officials increasingly regard as a pressing problem.

"Santa Cruz was selected along with other counties because of dramatic increase in venereal disease in 1975," reports Dr. Craig.

Donna Smith, who supervises the Santa Cruz VD clinic on Emeline Avenue cites 40 cases of gonorrhea and syphilis in the intermediate and high school age last year, and states, "We're seeing more kids from this age group in the clinic all the time."

No parental consent is needed from youngsters 12 and up, Smith adds, stating her program has been successful in bringing kids to the clinic

because all information is made in strict confidence.

Still, Smith remarked, only one of about nine cases is actually treated by public or private physicians, and the number of total visits to the clinics is growing every year.

By June 30, 1976, 453 cases of gonorrhea alone had been treated, while last year only 640 persons had been cured of the disease at the Santa Cruz and Watsonville clinics.

The workshop will include a slide-tape presentation and a lecture, with 20 teachers or so expected in attendance. Edler points out that the state won't reimburse the schools for the teachers' time until some sort of program is set up.

"I would imagine this would be a regular part of the curriculum," he added, noting that each district will set up its own teaching unit.

A similar state action program visited Santa Cruz four years ago, but "our problem has become much worse," says Dr. Craig. "It's a matter of education — we're in the find-

ing and treatment part of the deal, but we have to get to the preventive stage."

Both health and education officials are in agreement on what's caused the venereal disease boom. "Our society is getting looser," remarks Edler, while Craig adds, "The main source of VD is people who play the multiple partner game."

"People just aren't willing to listen to us," the county health officer concludes glumly. Both local and state officials hope that with increased educational emphasis on the problem, the next generation will hear the message loud and clear.

4-H Club Meeting

Membership night for the Surf City 4-H Club will be held Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. in the Messiah Lutheran Church, Spring and High streets. New members must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. For details call Mrs. William Rees, 423 - 6756.

For Sale

5 $\frac{3}{4}$ KARAT DIAMOND RING

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