

Physician assistants

Highly sought-after members of the health care profession

By Loraine McElish
staff writer

WHEN KATHLEEN Dobbs was working as a registered nurse at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit about 10 years ago she saw physician assistants in action. And the more she saw, the more the field appealed to her. Today she is one.

"Not a great deal of people know exactly what a physician assistant is," the Farmington resident said. "There are exactly 643 of them in Michigan. And for every one of them there are 20 jobs waiting."

"The field is so wide open you can just about pick and choose where you want to work and what you want to specialize in," she said.

Dobbs went back to school to become certified, was hired by Harper Hospital, and works with two physi-

cians who specialize in head and neck cancer.

"That was my choice. That is what I wanted," she said.

She has a few 12-hour days in her schedule and has two small children at home but still finds time to be an adjunct faculty member at Mercy College, teaching physician assistant student classes. And she is an active member of the Michigan Academy of Physician Assistants, which promotes the role of the physician assistants and acts as the watchdog agency for legislative concerns.

A PHYSICIAN assistant is a mid-level health professional who through education and training is qualified to provide a wide range of medical care and care in a specialty area. They work under physician supervision and can perform many of the tasks traditionally done by the physician.

The assistants practice in almost all health care settings, but are probably best known for their patient education and counseling skills.

"For most of us it's a second career for people who have had exposure to working in health care," Dobbs said.

"There is no doubt in my mind that of the people I know in this field we all could have all been accepted into medical school. For a very few being an assistant was a stepping stone (some have become doctors). But for most of us this is what we are and this is what we want to be."

"For me — and many of my colleagues — it was an extremely practical thing to do what with the factors of time and money and babies and family life."

"I work directly with the patient and family. There is no middleman. I enjoy the interaction with the social

worker or other consultants."

Physician assistant programs were begun in the mid-1960s to offset a shortage of doctors. In 1979 there were fewer than 1,500 practicing in the U.S. Today there are about 35,000 physician assistants in the country, including the part-timers. And the job market remains strong in most states.

Average pay is \$33,000 a year.

IN MICHIGAN, education to qualify as a physician assistant is offered by Mercy College of Detroit and Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

The Michigan Academy of Physician Assistants is housed in the Michigan State Medical Society Building, Suite 102, 1305 Abbott Road, Lansing 48823.

The academy's number is 1-517-337-9797.



"For me — and many of my colleagues — it was an extremely practical thing to do what with the factors of time and money and babies and family life."

— Kathleen Dobbs

Chorus sings Reflections

The Farmington Community Chorus presents its 10th annual winter concert entitled "Holiday Reflections" at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Dec. 8 and 9, in Harrison High School auditorium, 29995 12 Mile.

The chorus will perform many seasonal favorites including "White Christmas," "Sleigh Ride," "Little Drummer Boy," and a newly published Hanukkah song "Lamp Burning in the Night." Another new song, "Christmas Memories" is a favorite of the chorus.

The Farmingtons, a select group of 16 voices, add some holiday cheer with a jazz rendition of "Jingle Bells." Small ensembles, duets, and solo performances will round out the evening.

The 90 voices of the Farmington Community Chorus are under the directorship of Donald Stromberg with accompaniment by Susan Garr.

Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$4 for adults and \$3 for senior citizens and students. Children 10 and under are admitted free. Tickets are also available in advance from any chorus member or in City of Farmington Hills Department of Special Services at 31555 11 Mile Road.

For other information, contact chorus manager Sue McLean at 489-3559.



Farmington Community Chorus members Sue McLean (from left) E. K. Beal and Jeanette Maher are ready to spread some holiday cheer when the 10th annual winter concert takes place Friday and Saturday, Dec. 8-9.



The Dallas Brass

The Dallas Brass brings a new dimension to the traditional brass quintet with the addition of a percussionist, unusual instrumentation and original arrangements. The ensemble will be in concert to benefit Harrison

High School Band and Orchestra Boosters at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6, in the school, 29965 12 Mile Road. Reserved seats are \$8 and \$6, available by calling the school's music department, 489-3508.

UK-M professor talks about upheaval in USSR

The National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section, and its Business and Professional Branch will present Zvi Gitelman, professor of political science at the University of Michigan, at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30 in Adat Shalom Synagogue, in Farmington Hills. It is open to the public at no charge.

Professor Gitelman's talk is "Sovi-

et Jewry and Political Upheaval in the U.S.S.R.," and grows out of his extensive interest in and knowledge of the Jews of the Soviet Union.

In addition to his position in the U-M political science department, he is also the university's Preston R. Tisch Professor of Judaic Studies. He holds degrees from Columbia College, The Jewish Theological

Seminary and Columbia University, where he received his doctorate. He is the author of numerous articles and books, including his 1988 work, "A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1880-Present." He speaks six languages and is active on behalf of many Jewish organizations, both in the U.S. and in Israel.

Singer in concert

Darlene Welch, a Christian vocalist and pianist will visit Detroit First Church of the Nazarene Sunday, Dec. 3. The church is at 21280 Haggerty.

Welch will sing with the sanctuary choir in the morning services at 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. At 6 p.m. she will be in concert.

Welch has traveled the country as a song evangelist, and as a speaker in women's ministries, youth programs and church revivals.

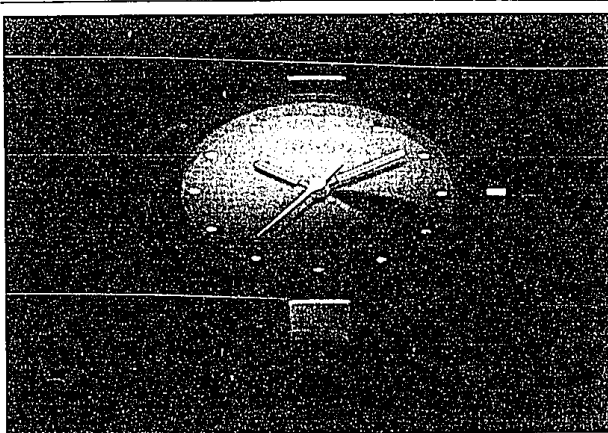
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