

Health and Wellness Center Student Health Services Programming

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Key Issues

Several factors were considered in determining program needs of a health service clinic within the Health and Wellness Center. The location of health services, the scope of care provided, students' strong preferences for a recreation center, the potential for the experiential learning for health students in Health Services, the philosophy of care, and the space and staff requirements were discussed. Various points of view on all components were shared.

Current Student Health Data: Student Health Services, at its current location (University Family Medicine at the School of Medicine), treats an average of 40 students per day. Between July 2004 and February 2005, there were 2,998 visits to Student Health Services. In the same time frame in 2005-06, there were 3,339 visits. These figures do not include the athletic injuries treated by the sports medicine fellow nor the individuals that received continuity care from a resident (e.g. diabetic patient, hypertensive patient). During the 2005-06 academic year, students are served by a physician assistant, nurse, and a physician who is not on site during all clinic hours. The staff relies on the assistance of a sports medicine fellow who provides services one afternoon per week, a visiting physician who works a minimum of one afternoon per week, and a medical resident who sees patients every morning. Additionally, University Family Medicine, where Student Health Services is housed, provides the services of a nurse practitioner and a nurse, and routinely offers backup services to manage any patient overflow.

Student Opinions Concerning Student Health: Given the compressed time frame of its charge, the committee referred to data collected from students surveyed in 2003. That data indicated that, while Student Health Services is located 1.2 miles from the Huntington campus, students preferred to travel that distance and have full outpatient services rather than to establish a minimum service facility on campus. Further, students were willing to pay higher fees to maintain the current level of services. Of those surveyed, 3% stated that they had no means of transportation to the Student Health Services site. In March 2006 additional feedback was solicited from student body senators and their constituents who strongly indicated they have a good health clinic, but no recreation center. They contend the number one priority should be a recreation center.

Student Health Options: The committee discussed three options. First, Student Health Services could remain a full service facility at its current location with regularly scheduled transportation between Student Health Services and campus. Second, a full service Student Health Services could be located on or adjacent to campus, either as a part of the Health and Wellness Center or as a separate facility. Third, an urgent care/triage center could be staffed 10-12 hours each day, 6 days per week by health care

professionals such as nurse practitioners. As is typical in most physician offices, this facility would not have on-site x-ray and/or laboratory services. University transportation services (when developed) or 911, would transfer any seriously ill or injured students/staff/faculty to a full-service hospital.

Major Themes from Committee Discussions:

1. Students want a recreation center that is state-of-the-art, attractive, offers a terrific “wow” factor, and of which they can be proud. They want a facility that easily accommodates the number of student users, and offers them ample opportunity for recreation and fitness enhancement. If any space or design of the recreation center has to be compromised to house Student Health Services, the students do not support Student Health Services integrated into the center.

2. The committee believes Student Health Services should be more accessible to students, and therefore recommends it be located on or near campus. In the event it is not moved to campus, the committee recommends the university provide regularly scheduled transportation directly to Student Health Services and/or a hospital emergency room from campus.

3. Students want a Student Health Services clinic that provides a full array of outpatient services, including x-ray, lab draws, and family planning. If, because of cost or space, a full-service clinic cannot be realized in the Health and Wellness Center, the students do not want Student Health Services integrated into the center.

4. The committee is aware of and supports the realization of the president’s vision of the Health and Wellness Center, which includes a fitness facility, a health clinic, and a living-learning community. The center will integrate education and services and rely on the collaboration of various entities to provide a full range of activities and services. Further, the committee believes that students in the various health and wellness programs of study would provide a natural living-learning community.

5. Recently, the Cabell County Health Department moved to another location that is less convenient for students. Due to the recent relocation, the committee recommends family planning services be offered at the Health Services site whether that remains at the Medical School location or moves to campus.

6. The committee felt constrained by the lack of budget and space parameters. All members were very aware that funding would be a factor, but because the committee was not given any budgetary or space parameters, its recommendations describe facilities that rely on unlimited resources.

Committee Recommendations

The committee is to be commended for its hard work and difficult discussions. Members possess an impressive passion to have a health clinic that will best benefit students and the university by providing health care and experiential learning in an affordable setting. After carefully weighing the advantages and disadvantages of a variety of options, the committee offers the following three options for consideration. (The order of their presentation is arbitrary.)

Option 1: The Student Health Services clinic be integrated into the Health and Wellness Center will be a “one-stop shop” with the ability to provide a complete array of outpatient medical treatments, including simple x-rays, lab draws, and family planning. The primary advantage of this option is students would receive all services at one location.

There will be

- a minimum of four and a maximum of six exam rooms,
- a minor procedures room,
- an x-ray facility,
- a medical records space,
- reception area,
- ample waiting space,
- ample storage space,
- nurses’ stations and office space for staff,
- staff restrooms,
- patient restrooms

The facility will have an outside entrance separate from the wellness center to protect patient privacy, and prevent ill students from mingling with well students. Further, there should be ample parking near the Health Services entrance to accommodate clinic patrons.

Staffing for the facility should include a minimum of

- 1 physician
- 2 physician assistants or 2 nurse practitioners
- 2.5 nurses
- X-ray technician
- Medical records clerk to serve as receptionist

There should be an adjacent triage area that will be open the same hours as the center to provide first aid treatment of injuries sustained through center use. This facility could provide triage for the general student population when the Health Services clinic is not open, and will be staffed by a nurse practitioner or a physician assistant, one medical assistant and a sports medicine position (eg: athletic trainer, sports medicine fellow). The triage area should minimally consist of

- 1 exam room
- 1 reception and waiting area
- Storage
- Staff office space

Option 2: Student Health Services will remain at its current location and the university will provide regularly scheduled transportation to and from the site. Full collaboration and integration of educational programming and activities will occur with events and opportunities scheduled at either the Health Services site or the Health and Wellness facility. The primary advantage of this option is that Health Services could continue to rely on Family Medicine for backup services and would continue to benefit from the financial efficiency that currently exists because of that partnership.

Option 3: An urgent care/ triage model would offer a level of care appropriate for the majority of treatment issues presented to Student Health Services. The clinic will evaluate presenting problems and will provide treatment for the most common (about two dozen) acute and common ailments. The clinic will include testing and vaccinations. Individuals with medical conditions needing a higher level of care will be referred to the appropriate resource. The primary advantage of this option is its cost effectiveness while addressing the majority of student concerns.

Students would access to services as follows:

- X-ray – provider will write prescription and student will go to a local hospital
- Lab – Some common labs such as strep screens, flu checks, and hbg. could be done on site; other labs could be drawn on site and sent them via courier to a laboratory facility
- Pharmacy/prescription meds – continue current arrangement where students purchase prescription medications from a local pharmacy for a minimum co-pay; and, as is the current practice, store samples from drug reps that can be given to students.
- Referrals – referrals will be made by the provider to the appropriate service of the student' choice.

The facility would have:

- nurses' stations and office space for staff,
- waiting area
- reception/billing area – Separated by closed window re: HIPAA – must be capable of being locked so that it can contain medical records
- 2 exam rooms
- 1 room for consultation/teaching
- provider offices
- lab area
- restrooms

Staffing for the facility should include a minimum of

- 1 full-time nurse practitioner/clinic coordinator
- 2 part-time nurse practitioners
- 2 part-time certified nursing assistants
- 1 full-time receptionist/medical records/billing clerk

- 1 medical director who would be available by phone to the practitioner and would be in the clinic two days a month

Under this option:

- STDs would be seen at the Health Department
- GYN exams would be limited to abdominal complaints
- Pregnancy testing would only be done when considering prescription medication or in making a specific diagnosis
- Any applicable insurance would be billed
- Students could use points on ID cards for payment