

THE PEDIATRIC ASSISTANT

A new member of the health team to be trained

Winston-Salem, N.C.

A health manpower shortage is rapidly growing to crisis proportions in the child care field. Beginning next spring, pediatric assistants will be trained at the Bowman Gray School of Medicine in a program under the direction of Drs. Weston M. Kelsey and Leland E. Powers. According to Dr. Kelsey, pediatricians and general practitioners who see children are already overburdened with heavy patient loads. Projections for 1980 are:

- U.S. child population to exceed 76 million
- An additional 100,000 pediatricians would be required
- Only about 12,000 will enter practice by then

The pediatric assistant would be ready to see patients, under a physician's supervision, after training that includes 2 years of college and 2 years in the special program. The program would include 1 year of technical classroom training and a one year preceptorship.

The pediatric assistant's responsibilities could include:

- Patient screening
- Detailed medical histories
- Physical examinations
- School health clinics
- Well-baby clinics
- Rural public health clinics

This special training program (the only other is planned at the University of Colorado) is supported by a U.S.P.H.S. grant.