

# Therapy program eases ills

by Dave Ferman

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If you're seriously injured in a motorcycle accident or stroke, your survival chances are better now than ever before.

But will the nurse who's taking care of you understand your special, long-term needs? Will she understand that recovery starts the moment you're wheeled into the hospital? And will she have specialized training in helping you?

In the past, probably not. But with more paralyzed accident victims needing rehabilitation each year, the UTA School of Nursing — bolstered by a \$30,000 grant from the Dallas Rehabilitation Institute (DRI) — now offers a four-course nursing tract for rehabilitation specialists.

The classes, which began this semester with a "pilot" course in early rehabilitation, will include 180 hours of clinical work and earn the graduate a nursing master's in rehabilitation, making UTA one of only six U.S. universities to offer such a degree.

And none too soon, according to the two UTA professors who will teach the classes.

"Usually, nurses only learn these things through symposiums or in-service education," said Assistant Professor Barbara Blue, who will teach along with Associate Professor Linda Marks. "We want an organized, recognized, consistent program with much more depth. Most of the people who need long-term rehabilitation are adults with spinal cord or head injuries from athletic trauma or car or motorcycle accidents.

"And only since World War II has there really been a concentration on rehabilitation. Because of the improved critical care and transportation of the injured, many more people are surviving. It's a very new concept."

UTA submitted the program proposal in 1983, and DRI awarded the grant this spring. DRI's adjunct director of nursing, Linda Henning, also will teach the four classes. They include Adult I, II and III and Rehabilitation Nursing, which are taught over the year — Adult I in the spring semester, Adult II in the summer and Adult III and Rehabilitation in the fall — worth a total of 15 hours. The 180 hours of clinical work — 90 in II, 90 in III — is currently being done at DRI, Dallas' Baylor Rehabilitation Center and Parkland Hospital, Harris Hospital in Fort Worth and Scott and White Hospital in Temple.

Five students are in the program now. But, with New York, Boston, Florida, Chicago and Alabama the only other places offering a similar degree, Marks and Blue expect — and are preparing for — people to come here from around the country.

"This program teaches a different type of nursing care," Blue said. "Hospitals have to pay their people to take programs, and they'd love to have our grads to not have to go to the expense of training people to get to our grads' level."

"We're going to start a mass recruiting

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