

You can dial a tape at BCH for medical advice

By Herbert Black
Globe Staff

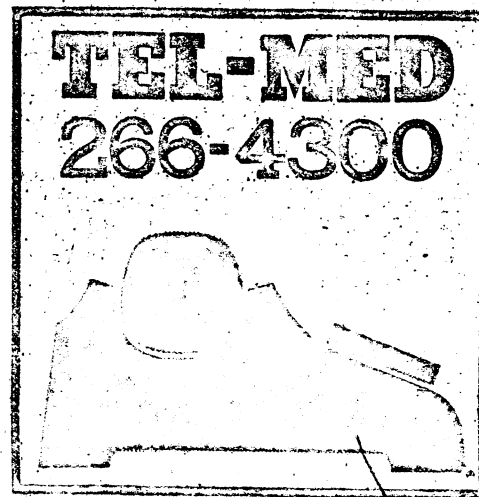
Would you like information, given in complete privacy — with nobody knowing who you are — about baldness, backaches, drugs, abortions, cockroaches or enereal disease?

All you have to do is call 266-4300 at Boston City Hospital and an obliging operator will play a taped health message or you.

It will help a lot if you first obtain a circular listing 189 available tape messages by name and number. Then all you do is give the number and the tape is played. If you lack the number the operators will select the tape they think most closely answers your question.

The system, called Tel-Med, is designed to be a tool for preventive medicine, educating people about such matters as feminine hygiene, measles, mumps, food poisoning, heart disease, cancer and chronic cough, to name but a few subjects. It is not an emergency number to obtain advice for meeting crisis situations.

For example, if you ask about baldness, the tape will tell you that with men the condition generally is inherited and that there is little one can do about it. The tape then explains that it is different with women. They now are losing hair because of all the abuse they give it with



hot air dryers, blowers, harsh shampoos, teasing, tight curlers and tight braids.

The tape urges women to give their hair a break and use mild shampoos. It suggests to both men and women that dandruff-flakey, dried oil — should be treated to protect hair.

A tape on abortion explains what it is, how it is performed at various stages of pregnancy. The message tells callers that since the Supreme Court decision of 1973 the decision rests with a woman and her physician. It explains that on or after 12 or 13 weeks the procedure should be performed in a hospital and that in 24 to 28

weeks the health of the mother — physical or mental — must be involved.

The tape explains that the abortion costs about \$150 in the first trimester and more than that in later stages. It suggests that the psychological and emotional after effects on the mother should be considered. Conferences with clergy and physicians are recommended. For additional information, the tape suggests calling the State Department of Public Health or Planned Parenthood and provides the numbers.

The birth control tape describes the various forms of contraception and also suggest specific information may be obtained from the state health department or Planned Parenthood. The venereal disease tape describes the various types of illness, the way they are induced and the consequences if not treated.

Three operators man the system, which includes two switchboards with facilities to play 20 tapes at a time.

The present set of tapes, which took 18 months to prepare, will be translated into Spanish and will be available in that language in six months, according to Leon S. White, commissioner of health and hospitals.

Answering a protest from Chico Munoz that Spanish-language tapes are not available immediately, White said the task of translation was too big.

The three operators who will man the Tel-Med system all speak both Spanish and English. They are Mertilina Tolland, Flora Mendoza and Enid Rivera. They will try to help Boston's 60,000 Spanish-speaking people until the tapes are translated and recorded. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

The only emergency-type information planned for the present is addresses of drug clinics and half-way houses.

Mayor Kevin White, speaking at dedication of the new public service yesterday, said that the Tel-Med system was not a big thing in itself, but might prove to be an extremely valuable resource for the people of Boston.

The tapes all are approved by medical committees, according to Dr. Grant Rodkey, president of the Suffolk Medical Society, who with Dr. Edward Keenan, chairman of health care education of the Society, helped organize the program.

The potential value of the tapes in reducing illness by education about sickness before it becomes an emergency was attested by the co-sponsorship of the program by Blue Shield, the Tri-State Regional Medical Program, the medical societies of Suffolk, Middlesex Central and Norfolk.

It is expected that the program will receive 200,000 calls in 1975.



City of Cambridge

3.

IN CITY COUNCIL

February 10, 1975

Councillor Ackermann

ORDERED:

That this City Council congratulate the Boston City Hospital on the development of Tel - Med, a telephone number that will give information on a variety of preventive health areas, and be it further

ORDERED:

That this City Council go on record endorsing this unique public health service and request the officials of the New England Telephone Company to print a list of tapes available under this program in the next edition of the telephone book.

City Council

Feb 10, 1975

Adopted by the affirmative vote

of 9 members

Paul S. Leahy City Clerk



City of Cambridge

3.

IN CITY COUNCIL

February 10, 1975

Councillor Ackermann

ORDERED:

That this City Council congratulate the Boston City Hospital on the development of Tel - Med, a telephone number that will give information on a variety of preventive health areas, and be it further

ORDERED:

That this City Council go on record endorsing this unique public health service and request the officials of the New England Telephone Company to print a list of tapes available under this program in the next edition of the telephone book.

City Council Feb. 10, 1975

Adopted by the affirmative vote

of 9 members

Paul E. Leahy City Clerk

Order # 3

54

C. Ackermann re: congratulating the
Boston City Hospital on Tel-Med.

In City Council,
February 10, 1975

2/10/75

CA
A

/