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# Gynecology service offered at women's clinic

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City Editor

With plans to open a office soon, the Women's Self Help Clinic, a branch of the Women's Coalition, aims at helping women become more aware of their bodies and will

also offer several gynecological services.

The acquisition of an intermediary office (one step away from a full scale clinic) will aid the self help group in administering pregnancy tests (now done through the Women's Coalition office) and conducting birth control counseling and self help classes and presentations. Proposals to offer pap smear tests and gonorrhea tests are also being looked into, according to member Patty Parsons.

The self help classes include demonstrations to interested groups on such information as performing breast and cervical examinations and birth control methods, Parsons said. Such demonstrations are usually a revelation to many women who have never seen a cervix, she added.

Parsons said the group hopes to eventually establish a fulltime women's clinic, similar to the Emma Goldman Clinic in Iowa City, which would offer more

complicated services such as abortions and menstrual extractions. Such a clinic would need to be staffed by a medical doctor, she added.

The idea for a self help clinic, which originated last spring, developed because of "bad experiences" women had with male doctors, particularly gynecologists, according to Parsons.

"They (male doctors) do not understand our bodies because they do not have one (a female body)," she said. "They can't understand what cramps or labor pains are like because they have never had them."

She added that too often doctors assume that a woman's pain is just in her head.

Through a woman's clinic and self help demonstrations, women will be "getting in touch with their bodies" and getting to know their anatomy, Parsons said. This will enable women to operate from a basis of knowledge to ask questions from

when they visit a doctor, she explained.

To help women "get in touch with their bodies," the self help group will present a demonstration Oct. 13 during Women's Week involving a slide show, breast and cervical examinations, birth control discussion and a question and answer period.

An impetus for the local self help clinic should be provided in November with the first conference of the National Women Controlled Health Projects, gathering in Ames. The conference, slated for Nov. 15-18, will be a time to assess where the self help clinic movement is presently and discuss plans for the future, according to Parsons.