

# FOCUS ON:

## *Gender Identity Service*

A new service, the only one of its kind in New England, has begun at 74 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138. Gender Identity Service operates a counseling and referral service for transsexuals, counseling and therapy for transvestites, and research and educational programs.

For transsexuals (those who feel that their biologically assigned sex is incongruent with their inner sense of maleness or femaleness) there is a unique and comprehensive program. Trained therapists assist the client to understand the problem, explore alternative solutions and help the client to make a decision that is a good one for him or her. A social worker works with relatives. Legal steps are instituted to permanently change names, school and employment records, resolve credit problems, institute divorce proceedings. A vocational counselor helps direct the client to appropriate placements. An endocrinologist makes medical referrals. Throughout, all these steps are coordinated by a psychiatric nurse.

For transvestites (those who wear clothing of the opposite sex), an initial intake interview is held, and a referral is made to a therapist on the staff. Short-term supportive therapy, long-term psycho-

therapy, couples counseling and family counseling are among the treatments provided.

The research program concentrates on exploring the causes of transsexualism and transvestism and the medical, psychological and sociological aspects of the development of sex-roles and the roots of masculine and feminine behaviors. The educational program involves speaking engagements with medical groups, college classes, graduate students in sexuality and family life programs; presentations on radio and television; and curriculum development for programs in sex education. There are teaching conferences on specific patients, as well as the subject in general. Finally, there are complementary programs such as the Community Sex Information Service (an "anonymous referral service for general sexual problems"), the Homophile Community Health Service, research studies in hormone levels in homosexuals, and sociological research in gender development and transvestism. Symposia and workshops are scheduled to begin throughout New England.

For an appointment, prospective clients may call UN4-8181. Those wishing information, speakers or a workshop, may call UN4-8181 and ask for Deborah Feinbloom