

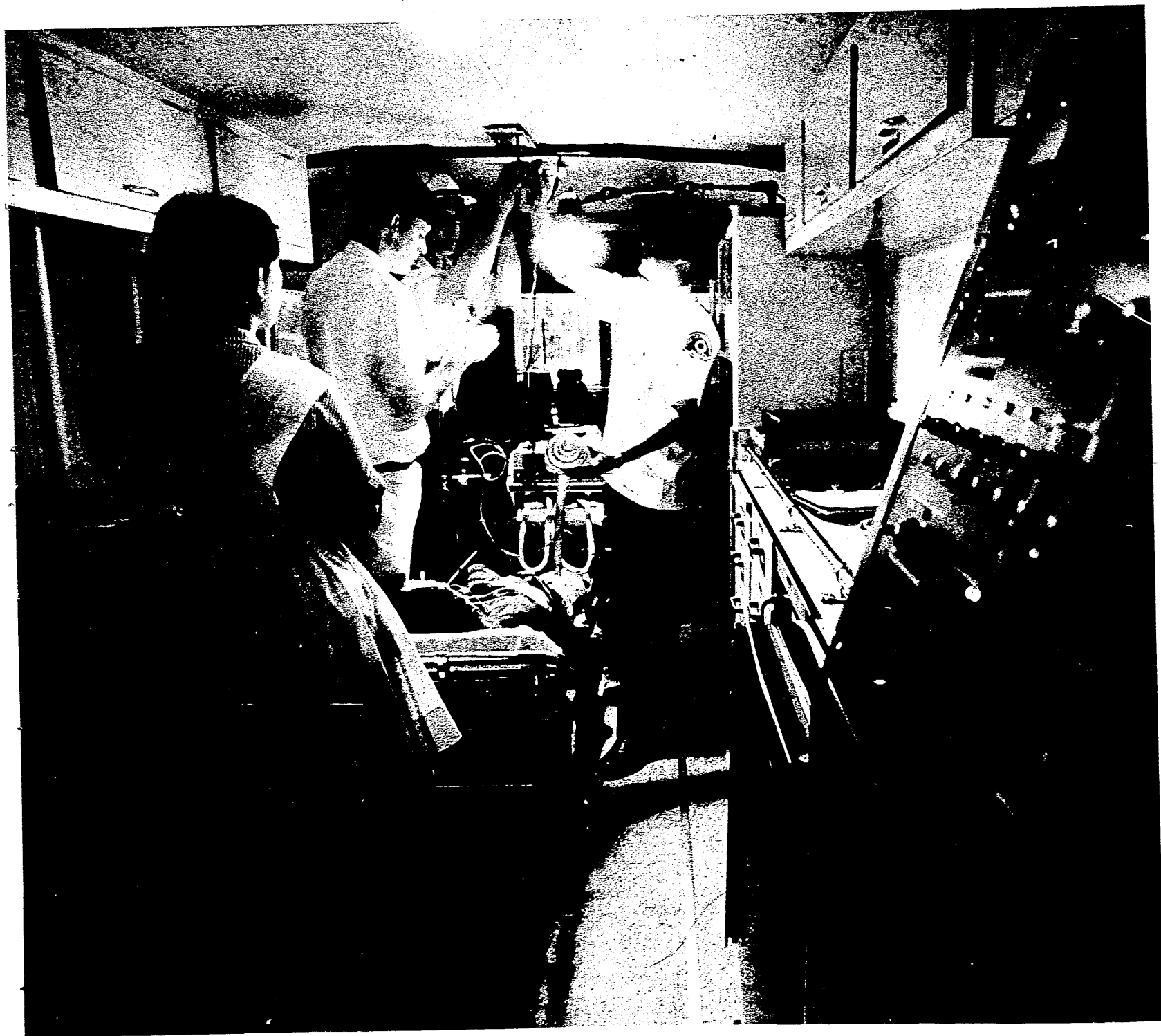
# Medic One



# Coronary Care

*Photos by Bruce McKim*

By night, Medic One raced off from Harborview Medical Center. Later, the coronary-care team headed by Dr. Kimberly Curtis, right, prepared a patient for transportation to a hospital.



# on Wheels

IF A SEATTLE resident slumped over, the victim of a heart attack, last year, the odds were against his surviving. Of approximately 1,500 heart-attack deaths during 1969, 60 per cent came before the victim even reached a hospital coronary-care unit.

Today things are different. Seconds after a family member or co-worker of the victim places a call for help, the sharp beeping of alarms sounds at Harborview Medical Center. It's the signal for a doctor and two fire fighters to spring into action and Medic One, the Mobile Intensive Coronary Care Unit of the Seattle Fire Department, is on the way.

With an average time per run of nine minutes, the brightly painted red and white van has sped to the patient's side with all the portable equipment that could be found in any hospital.

A Fire Department aid car will have responded to the emergency call to give first aid until Medic One arrives. The big "hospital on wheels" brings to the scene battery-driven electrocardiogram monitors, pacemakers, heart-lung resuscitators and defibrillators (electrical shock devices to correct heart-beat disorders) along with all necessary medication.

At the site the three-man Medic One team will work on a patient up to 50 minutes in order to stabilize the heart beat and allow the patient to breathe on

his own. The unit then transports the patient to any hospital with a coronary-care unit. The age of Medic One patients thus far has ranged from 17 to 70. More than a dozen of these actually were clinically dead when the unit arrived on the scene.

Medic One, the only 24-hour-on-duty unit of its type in the United States, was begun with a \$175,000 grant from the Washington/Alaska Regional Medical Program of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The Washington State Health Department and Washington State Heart Association also responded with financial support. The University of Washington School of Medicine administers the grant.

Each of the 15 fire fighters working in the program has had more than 40 hours of emergency coronary-care procedures under the direction of Dr. Leonard Cobb, chief of Harborview's cardiology unit.

The van they use is 22 feet long and cost \$28,000. It has a patient island in the center so that the doctor and aides can work on all sides.

Medic One has made about 500 runs since going into operation. Doctors who have worked in the program say that seven or eight "permanent, long-term" saves of clinically dead persons have been made. In addition, the doctors and fire fighters have been able to give preventive care to some 40 or 50 others.



The Medic One crew can set up a hospital anywhere, in this case, a backyard. A doctor (partly hidden on the left) along with fire fighters and aid-car members prepared oxygen and drugs for a patient lying on the lawn.

CONTINUED

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