

# Midwifery Being Taught, Practiced Here

## ECU News Bureau

A unique training experience is awaiting East Carolina University medical students when Josephine Hookway, a nurse-midwife on the clinical staff of the ECU Department of Obstetrics-Gynecology begins teaching later this month.

Mrs. Hookway sees her teaching role as giving medical students practical training and instruction in support of expectant mothers.

"I see myself as one who's helping to improve the outcome of pregnancy," she said.

Mrs. Hookway's objective is timely and necessary, since the infant mortality rate for eastern North Carolina was 21.3 per 1,000 lives births in 1975, as compared with 18.5 for the state and 16.1 for the nation.

The N. C. Board of Medical Examiners, the agency which licenses all Tarheel doctors, granted Mrs. Hookway approval in April, allowing her to carry out her current responsibilities under supervision of an obstetrician-gynecologist.

She explained that she can handle all aspects of normal pregnancy from the "pregnancy test through delivery." This means she can give instruction to other nurses and perform physicals, she said.

Because her duties are similar to those of a medical doctor, Mrs. Hookway finds it necessary to carry malpractice insurance. In addition to her teaching duties, she is doing normal deliveries at Pitt Memorial and working in two prenatal clinics in the Pitt County Health Department.

During June she performed 14 deliveries.

Mrs. Hookway's experiences and credential are impressive. She received her registered nursing education in her native Great Britain at St. Mary's College in Cardiff. She worked as a nurse midwife and instructor of medical students in England for five years.

In 1959, she and her husband emigrated from England to the Kinston area, where her hus-



"HOLD HIM LIKE SO," Mrs. Hookway tells a new mother of the baby she recently helped deliver. (ECU Medical School Photo)

band took a job as a physicist with DuPont. After taking the registered nursing licensure examination, Mrs. Hookway went to work at Lenoir Memorial Hospital in the Labor and Delivery Department.

In 1972, she left Lenoir Memorial to teach nursing at Lenoir Community College. After four years as an instructor, she went to Booth Maternity Center in Philadelphia for a four-month course in her specialty and was duly certified as a nurse-midwife by the

American College of Nurse-Midwives last year.

Mrs. Hookway says she has good rapport and working relationships with Pitt County obstetricians, who asked her to come to Greenville to help with the patient load.

"She is doing an excellent job. We don't know what we would do without her," said one. "She serves as a liaison person between the Health Department and us, and she takes care of patients prenatally and postnatally."

"I think there is a need for more nurse specialists to relieve overworked doctors," says Mrs. Hookway. "In Europe all normal hospital deliveries are performed by nurse midwives."

Practicing midwives are also more common in the Northeast and Midwest regions of the country than in the South, she said.

"Many people ask me if I believe in home deliveries," she said, "I'm not in favor of them. I think women should have babies in the hospital, which is the safest place."