

Largest donation in nursing college's history

UNMC College of Nursing in Omaha to build \$14 million facility to increase number of nurses, nurse faculty

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The University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing has had to turn away more than 1,000 qualified nursing school applicants in the past five years. The diagnosis: a lack of space in its facilities and a shortage of those who teach students.

On Oct. 22 in Omaha, the UNMC College of Nursing will host a ceremonial groundbreaking for a building that will enable the college to enroll more nursing students and prepare more nurse faculty.

A \$14 million, 43,000-square-foot building will be built adjacent to the college's current facility at 42nd Street and Dewey Avenue. The free-standing Center for College of Nursing Sciences will be funded entirely through private donations. Projected opening is March 2010.

Omaha philanthropists Ruth and Bill Scott provided the lead gift for the center.

"This very generous gift from Ruth and Bill Scott will help us increase the number of nurses who will care for our loved ones across the state and beyond," said UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D. "Nurses are the backbone of health care. Our call for more nurses to alleviate the shortage has been answered by the Scotts."

Dr. Maurer will be joined during the ceremony by other leaders from the University of Nebraska and UNMC, as well as local and state government, including Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy, Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey, University of Nebraska Regent Randy Ferlic, M.D., University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken and UNMC College of Nursing Dean Virginia Tilden, D.N.Sc.

The new facility will enable the college to annually enroll 265 additional students in Omaha by the year 2020—an increase of nearly 70 percent over the current 385 students. The college also will dramatically increase graduates in its master's and

doctoral programs—programs that prepare nurses to become faculty members.

The projected shortage of nurses in Nebraska is expected to reach 20 percent by 2020—about 3,800 registered nurses—with rural areas hit hardest. A large percentage of nurses are employed in hospital settings.

By 2020, 112 more UNMC students will graduate and enter the workforce annually. In addition, 24 more nurse faculty will be added to the current 61 in Omaha, as well as 11 more researchers and staff.

"The focus of this new facility is to produce more nurses and educate a future faculty workforce because the more nurse faculty we can prepare, the more they can teach the new students," said Virginia Tilden, D.N.Sc., dean of the UNMC College of Nursing. "While in the past seven or eight years we've done our best to maximize our faculty, we're limited by such things as faculty-to-student ratio."

Dr. Tilden noted the average age of faculty in Nebraska is 53 and large numbers of faculty will retire in the coming decade.

UNMC is grateful to the Scotts.

"Everywhere you look at this university, you see the hand of Ruth and Bill Scott. They're just such wonderful, generous, visionary and humble friends of UNMC. They observe trends, they look for opportunities to help and they are moved by what will matter for Nebraska. We are just so deeply touched and affected by this gift. The college is 90 years old and this is the largest and most generous gift in the college's history," said Dr. Tilden.

The college's current building, which houses and will continue to house classrooms, clinical skills labs, research labs and offices, is overcrowded and doesn't meet university space standards,

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Contact: Vicky Cerino
UNMC Public Affairs
office (402)559-5190
cell (402) 350-0898
vcerino@unmc.edu

The entire press kit can be found online at:
www.unmc.edu/nursing

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Medical Center

UNMC is the only public health science center in the state. Its educational programs are responsible for training more health professionals practicing in Nebraska than any other institution.

Through their commitment to education, research, patient care and outreach, UNMC and its hospital partner, The Nebraska Medical Center, have established themselves as one of the country's leading centers in cancer, transplantation biology, bioterrorism preparedness, neurodegenerative diseases, cardiovascular diseases, genetics, biomedical technology and ophthalmology.

UNMC's research funding from external sources now exceeds \$82 million annually and has resulted in the creation of more than 2,400 highly skilled jobs in the state. UNMC's physician practice group, UNMC Physicians, includes 513 physicians in 50 specialties and subspecialties who practice primarily in The Nebraska Medical Center. For more information, go to UNMC's Web site at www.unmc.edu.

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Dr. Tilden said. The new center will include five additional classrooms, nine clinical skills development laboratories, conference space, five research spaces, offices, a student technology cluster and a technology teaching lab. The project also will provide funds for minor remodeling in the college's current building.

Dr. Tilden said the center also will help the college in its goal to double its research funding by the year 2020. It currently is ranked 28 out of 102 schools of nursing in U.S. National Institutes of Health grant funding.

Rosanna Morris, chief nursing officer of The Nebraska Medical Center, UNMC's hospital partner, said a proactive approach to ensure more individuals go into nursing will serve the community well.

"We know the number of individuals seeking health care within the next 10 to 15 years will increase significantly," Morris said. "It's a phenomenal time for the UNMC College of Nursing to take such a fundamental step to increase the number of women and men accepted into the nursing program. That will significantly benefit the community at large. I applaud their efforts and congratulate them on a tremendous accomplishment."

Brandi Babcock of David City, Neb., has bachelor's degrees in biotechnology and nursing, and is pursuing a master's degree in the UNMC College of Nursing family nurse practitioner program. "Being a nurse gives me a chance to help people and make a difference," Babcock said. "Patient care is the center of my passion and what drives me to further my health care goals. What the Scotts are doing with this generous gift is influencing the health and lives of so many people."

Ruth Scott's passion for nursing and the health of others were factors that influenced the Scotts' decision to make a gift to nursing. "You sure can't be sick and be in the hospital if you don't have a good nurse," said Ruth Scott. "Nursing has always been a driving force with me. I had this desire and said if I ever had money to help health-wise, I would. Now I'm trying to do something."

Scott wanted to be a nurse but when she was 13, a doctor told her she would have to think about another career because of her health problems at the time. "When I had three little boys and was up doing laundry at midnight... and now I have 13 grandchildren and run a bridge studio... I guess I proved him wrong. I tell my granddaughters, 'Be a nurse,' and that nursing is a really satisfying career. The job opportunities are astronomical no matter where you live."

Other major projects to expand student enrollment include: a proposed \$17.5 million facility for the Lincoln Division to be completed in 2012; and in Norfolk, Northeast Community College and Faith Regional Health Services are leading a capital campaign to build a \$12.9 million facility to establish a division. The West Nebraska Division in Scottsbluff recently completed a \$600,000 renovation and the Kearney Division will be upgrading classroom technology.

The UNMC College of Nursing, which employs 132 full and part-time faculty, has an average annual enrollment of 1,000 students in its programs, which include a bachelor's degree in nursing, master's degree in nursing and doctoral degree in nursing. One half of Nebraska's bachelor-degree prepared nurses are graduates of the college. Consistently, about 95 percent of its graduates get jobs in Nebraska.