

University of Nebraska Medical Center Community Outreach Programs

November 2003

The University of Nebraska Medical Center, the only public-supported academic health science center in the state, has a wide array of programs uniquely dedicated to addressing community needs that are not met by traditional medical models of care. Each involve education, research and patient care carried out by UNMC faculty, students and staff from east to west Nebraska, across 500 miles of the state. The programs reach out to urban and rural populations, as well as expose children and young adults, particularly multicultural youth, to the health professions as a career. UNMC, which has an active presence in nearly 100 Nebraska communities, was cited for a variety of programs and partnerships dedicated to addressing the needs of urban and rural Nebraska.

Reaching Out to Urban, Underserved Populations

· **The SHARING Clinic (Student Health Alliance Reaching Indigent Needy Groups).** UNMC students in the health professions run a weekly, year-round, clinic to provide care to the medically underserved in South Omaha, an area that includes culturally diverse, low-income populations. Over the years, the students have expanded the clinic's services to include medical exams, pharmacy, social services, and lab/X-ray.

· **The RESPECT Clinic (Responsible Early STD Prevention Education and Community Testing).** In 2001, UNMC students opened a clinic to test, counsel and treat patients with sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS in South Omaha. RESPECT clinic volunteers distributed bilingual brochures about the clinic to retail and social outlets in South Omaha. The clinic also offers Spanish interpreters to the predominantly Hispanic/Latino population. Since its inception, more than 400 volunteers have provided primary medical services to more than 1,000 patients at both the SHARING Clinic and the RESPECT Clinic.

· **The GOOD LIFE Clinic (Greater Omaha Outreach for Diabetes Lifestyles Impacting Fitness and Education).** In 2002, UNMC students opened the GOOD LIFE Clinic to serve indigent people with Type II diabetes. The interdisciplinary clinic brings together medical, nursing, pharmacy, medical technology and nutrition students. In the six months since it opened, 24 patients have been seen at the monthly clinic intended to help patients understand and manage their disease.

· **Partnership with ConAgra Foods.** Two years ago, UNMC's Community Partnership formed a relationship with ConAgra Foods to improve the overall health and well being of ConAgra employees. Three main areas of focus are health-care, immigration and childcare. Health screenings have been conducted at three ConAgra Foods plants in Omaha and one plant in Grand Island. About 700 people received blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol screenings. The majority of those served were African-American, Hispanic, Bosnian and Vietnamese.

· **North Omaha Community Care Council.** UNMC teamed up with community members in North Omaha to form the council, which addresses the health concerns of diverse, underserved communities in North Omaha. The council involves community members who live or work in the area to provide direction on how to better provide health-care services. Based upon the council's advice, the community built a new facility, which offers a wide variety of health services and provides a training site for medical students. The council continues to meet regularly to address community health issues. A few of the regularly scheduled community events include the Black Family Health and Wellness Association Health Screenings; the All Stars Alcohol and Drug Prevention program for youth; Mobile Nursing Center clinics, an annual bicycle-safety rodeo; a diabetes support group; and a G.E.D. program for Sudanese immigrants.

· **South Omaha Community Care Council.** Following the success of the North Omaha Community Care Council, UNMC and its teaching hospital, The Nebraska Medical Center, formed this council to work with community leaders in South Omaha to address health issues unique to the South Omaha community. The council meets every other month.

· **For the Love of Family.** The South Omaha Community Care Council and UNMC and The Nebraska Medical Center expanded a previously developed Spanish-speaking parenting program that reunites parents and children. Parents complete an eight-week course to be reunited with their children.

· **Omaha Healthcare Consortium.** UNMC and The Nebraska Medical Center Community Partnership took the lead in establishing and coordinating the Omaha Healthcare Consortium, a 22-member consortium of hospitals and health-care organizations that has received \$1 million from Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to provide care to the uninsured.

· **Diabetes education programs.** Professional staff members offer diabetes education classes at no cost to individuals in North Omaha. Bilingual nurses teach the same classes in Spanish in South Omaha. A cooking video in Spanish was developed that demonstrates techniques for preparing traditional foods in compliance with a diabetic health program.

· **Hope Medical Outreach Coalition.** UNMC physicians are members of the Hope Medical Outreach Coalition, a non-profit organization that donates its time to provide care for the homeless and underserved. Each year, the coalition cares for more than 4,000 patients, coordinates more than 1,000 referrals to specialists, facilitates more than 100 surgeries, obtains more than \$1 million in donated health care, procedures and medications annually, cares for more than 250 dental patients, fills or supports more than 5,000 prescriptions and answers more than 3,000 patient advocacy calls.

Reaching Out to Rural, Underserved Populations

The Rural Health Education Network (RHEN) is the umbrella under which all UNMC rural outreach education activities are developed. Among the efforts across Nebraska are:

· **Family Medicine Residency Program Rural Training Track.** The Family Medicine Residency Rural Training Track, established in 1991, is now the largest in the nation. Volunteer and paid preceptors in rural communities are the key to its success. The training track is designed to get residents out of urban centers and into rural areas, to prepare them specifically for rural practice, and to increase the likelihood that they will choose rural areas in their careers. Of the physicians who graduated through the track, 90 percent currently practice in rural communities.

· **Combined Outstate Residency Experience (CORE).** The CORE program selects four rural sites that are underserved. Sites remain on the CORE program for up to three years during which CORE provides a family practice resident. Each resident rotates to a rural site for two months. In the past 20 years of the program, 19 of 22 sites have successfully recruited at least one physician to continue to meet local needs.

· **Diabetes Management in the Native American Populations.** The School of Allied Health Professions is working with the tribal diabetes programs and tribal colleges in Macy and Winnebago, Neb., to deliver courses on prevention and management of diabetes in the Native American population. The primary purpose is to increase opportunities for tribal members to eventually provide health care in their communities. A course in health care careers was delivered via distance education to both tribal college students and senior high school students. These efforts have been partially funded by a Quentin Burdick Interdisciplinary Rural Training Grant from

· **Rural Rotations.** During their clinical training, UNMC students participate in rural rotations under the direction of volunteer preceptors. UNMC's volunteer faculty exceeds 1,000 with preceptors training students many times a year. While on their rotations, students are encouraged to participate in community health activities at clinics and local schools.

· **Winter Workshop.** This four-day event provides the opportunity for 20 undergraduate students to visit UNMC and learn about agro medicine and rural health issues. This program has received funding support from the UNMC College of Medicine Alumni Association and annual support from a private foundation. Participants in the Winter Workshop have gone on to become leaders in rural health.

· **Cultural Competency Workshop.** RHEN has worked with the Nebraska Minority Public Health Association to develop an annual workshop on cultural competency for pre-health professional students at Nebraska undergraduate schools. This program is a weeklong didactic workshop with a research component and an additional 15-hour practicum. The project is partially funded through the Nebraska Healthcare Cash Fund.

· **Executive Leadership Development Programs.** For the second year, RHEN was awarded a nationally competitive contract to provide three Executive Leadership Development Programs for American Indian health care personnel nationwide. Each program is one week long and is attended by people employed in tribal, government and urban Indian health-care facilities across the United States. More than 150 participants are anticipated to complete the course by fall 2003.

· **Mini-Medical School.** UNMC and its co-sponsors in 12 communities across the state, present twice-a-year, live via satellite the UNMC Mini-Medical School, a free public education series. The goal of the series is to educate people on health issues that affect them and the world in which they live, as well as highlight the strides being made in research at UNMC as it applies to the topic of the series. The series is geared for the layperson.

Reaching Out to K-12 Students in Diverse, Urban Areas and Underserved Rural Areas

· **The Career Connection Science Academy** is a partnership with Girls Inc. of Omaha and the campus. Each month, about 20 female, fourth- through seventh-graders are introduced to different health science careers. An experienced full-time, science teacher is available to work with the girls, most of whom are African-American.

· **Community Academy Health Science Careers Exploration Program.** The Community Academy provides hands-on learning experiences in the health sciences to students in 8th through 12th grades. Emphasis is placed on the recruitment of underrepresented minorities, females and those who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Presently there are more than 60 students participating in the monthly campus program during the school year. During the summer, there are two, three-week sessions that reach 40 participants.

· **Adopt-A-School Partnership.** In 1990, UNMC entered into a formal partnership with three schools in the North Omaha community. Because of the proximity of the three schools to each other, UNMC has a presence in the lives of many students as they progress from K-12th grades. Projects have included providing achievement certificates given to children who improve their science grades, speakers in the classroom, and tours of the Medical Center campus to expose children to careers in many health professions. A highlight of the year is a program called "A Day At College," during which about 100 fourth-graders spend the day on campus participating in classroom lectures and hands-on learning experiences.

· **Career Day.** The annual event provides 225 students from about 42 rural high schools the opportunity to learn about health professions opportunities from UNMC faculty and students. In its fifth year, Career Day is sponsored in coordination with the UNMC Student Association for Rural Health.

· **Eighth Grade Health/Science Meet.** Since 1993, more than 3,000 eighth-graders from across Nebraska have participated in regional science meets. Each year, up to 80 students are invited to attend a state meet on the UNMC campus. The meet provides the mostly rural students with educational, hands-on experiences to inspire them to pursue health careers.

· **RHEN Community Grants.** For the past five years, UNMC's Rural Health Education Network has provided funds to develop collaboration between health-care organizations and school systems in rural Nebraska communities. Twenty-four small grants have been provided to 18 community organizations to encourage students to pursue science and health careers.

· **Teacher Connections.** In coordination with the Nebraska Academy of Teachers of Science, UNMC sponsors an Annual Teacher Connections Day for rural high school science teachers. Teachers spend a day on campus at UNMC with scientists and researchers. T

he ultimate goal of the project is to develop a scientific session that can be taken back to the high school classroom. Each year, up to 20 teachers participate in this project. Currently, there are plans to incorporate the field of genetics into the high school science curriculums.