

Delegates program mobilizes UNMC supporters

by Chuck Brown

A program run through UNMC's Government Relations office gives medical center backers a forum to express their support.

The grassroots advocacy program – called the UNMC Delegates – is composed of people willing to advocate on behalf of the medical center to federal and state representatives.

The program began in August 2006, and has grown to about 300 alumni, students and friends of UNMC, as well as faculty and staff. Anyone willing to advocate on behalf of UNMC is encouraged to become a delegate.

"We have a strong contingent of people who support UNMC and the work being done here in research, education and patient care," said Mark Bowen, director of UNMC Government Relations. "The Delegates' support is vital to advancing our mission and the program serves as a vehicle for these people to stay informed and express their support to lawmakers and others who guide policy."

The free program uses e-mail to communicate with delegates regarding issues of importance to UNMC. Delegates receive informational e-mails regarding congressional and state legislative developments and are called to action when crucial issues arise.

Kathleen Newman of Ashland, Neb., is an advocate of the program.

"Nebraska has many health care challenges and the Delegates Program lets us know what we, as citizens, can do to improve UNMC's ability to meet those challenges," she said.

"I see myself as just an 'ordinary' person who might never make a difference on issues of such enormous importance. Yet here I am.

"I am grateful for the many opportunities I've had

to see the great work of UNMC's dedicated medical professionals. We see their plans, hear their vision and experience their accomplishments. Nebraskans rely on UNMC's continued success and I hope that I can assist with that achievement," Newman said.

Members also are invited to attend an annual dinner as well as Delegates-only quarterly events, such as the recent lunchtime forum with Richard Raymond, M.D., the U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Food Safety.

Past event speakers include Duane Acklie, chairman of Crete Carrier Corporation; Joann Schaefer, M.D., Nebraska's chief medical officer; Joel

Johnson, M.D., '61, Nebraska state senator and Tom Rosenquist, Ph.D., UNMC vice chancellor for research.

To become a delegate, complete the online registration at www.unmc.edu/dept/unmcdelegates, or complete and return the reply card attached to the back cover of this issue.

Making a Difference

One day an elephant saw a hummingbird lying on its back with its tiny feet up in the air. "What are you doing?" asked the elephant.

The hummingbird replied, "I heard that the sky might fall today, and so I am ready to help hold it up, should it fall."

The elephant laughed cruelly. "Do you really think," he said, "that those tiny feet could help hold up the sky?"

The hummingbird kept his feet up in the air, intent on his purpose, as he replied, "Not alone. But each must do what he can. And this is what I can do."

HOLDING UP HALF THE SKY
A CHINESE FOLKTALE