

# P E R S P E C T I V E

## UNMC seeks solutions to health care shortage

An important piece of the University of Nebraska Medical Center's mission is to educate health care professionals to serve the state of Nebraska and beyond. We take this role very seriously, as evidenced by our nationally recognized programs and the high quality of health care in Nebraska. As this issue of UNMC Connect illustrates, however, the demand for health care professionals nationally outpaces the supply, and Nebraska is no different.

Shortages of physicians, nurses and other health care providers are prevalent, and these shortages will be even more acute as the workforce gets older and an aging population requires more care. More than 36 million Americans are older than 65. By 2030, that number will nearly double, with one in five Americans being over age 65. With the huge number of baby boomers now in retirement or nearing retirement, providing quality care to seniors is perhaps the most significant health care challenge faced by our country. The need for specialized care in geriatric medicine has never been greater.

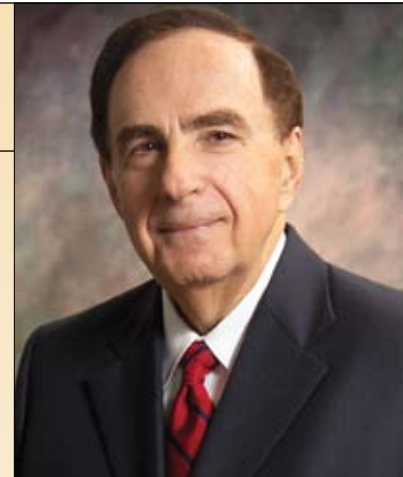
At UNMC, we treat every challenge as an opportunity, and we're addressing the shortage of health care professionals and the aging population at several levels.

One, we're constructing the Home Instead Center for Successful Aging.

This \$10.2 million facility will offer specialized services aimed at helping seniors age better and live healthier lives. It will be the region's only free-standing center focused on aging that is tied to an academic medical center. The lead gift for this center came from Lori and Paul Hogan, co-founders of Home Instead Senior Care.

Two, we've increased the number of students that we accept in our College of Medicine classes. This year, for the first time in 30 years, we increased our class size – from 120 students to 130. Within two years, we hope to increase that number to 140 students. This change was made possible, in part, because of the construction of the Michael E. Sorrell Center for Health Science Education, which opened this past fall. More than 1,200 donors, led by Omahans Ruth and Bill Scott and including nearly 1,000 alumni, made that \$52.7 million facility possible.

Three, we're expanding the number of students whom we educate in the College of Nursing. Already, we've broken ground on the Center for College of Nursing Sciences, a \$14 million, privately funded nursing center in Omaha, again with the support of Ruth and Bill Scott. We're also excited about the proposed College of Nursing Northern Division, which would be centered in Norfolk. Citizens in that community have raised money to construct the facility,



and we've asked for state support to support our operations there. We're hopeful that the Legislature will fund this, as well as the construction of a new nursing facility in Lincoln. Combined, these projects will allow us to educate many more nurses who will directly serve patients, as well as train and educate faculty who will teach those students.

The work is far from done. We must expand the class size in all of our professional programs, but we must have additional resources to add faculty and educational space. Despite tough economic times, the state of Nebraska must act now to ensure that Nebraska citizens receive the best health care in the years to come.

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Harold M. Maurer, MD".

HAROLD M. MAURER, M.D.  
Chancellor