

UNMC alum to direct Rural Health Education Network

As a medical student on rotation in western Nebraska, Patrik Johansson, M.D., '97, witnessed first-hand the challenges of providing health care in rural areas, an experience that greatly influenced his career interests. Now, he has returned to Omaha to become director of the Rural Health Education Network (RHEN) at UNMC.

"The position allows me to return to my home state to address health disparities and enhance community health through workforce development," said Dr. Johansson, who also serves as associate professor in the department



Patrik Johansson, M.D., '97

of health promotion, social and behavioral health in the UNMC College of Public Health.

As RHEN director, Dr. Johansson works to strengthen rural partnerships with the Area Health Education Centers, local public health departments, health professions associations and state, tribal and federal agencies.

Dr. Johansson previously taught at George Washington University's School of Public Health and Health Services. He also served as deputy chief medical officer for the Greater Southeast Community Hospital in Washington, D.C.

He grew up in Gothenburg, Sweden, Worcester, Mass., and Omaha, where he graduated from high school. He majored in international relations and Japanese at Brown University, graduated from the UNMC College of Medicine in 1997, and obtained his master's of public health degree from Harvard University's School of Public Health.

UNMC partners with UNK in effort to educate more rural physicians



UNMC's Jeff Hill, M.D., '77, right, joins Peggy Abels and UNK Chancellor Doug Kristensen to announce the new KHOP program.

In a proactive move to help meet the demand for family physicians in rural Nebraska, UNMC and the University of Nebraska at Kearney have established the Kearney Health Opportunities Program (KHOP).

"With 32 percent of rural physicians over the age of 55, workforce projections indicate a critical shortage of physicians in rural Nebraska over the next 5 to 10 years," said UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D.

KHOP targets high school seniors interested in family medicine and is modeled after the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP), which UNMC started in 1990 to encourage rural residents to pursue careers in health care and practice in small communities throughout Nebraska. KHOP works like this:

- Five students a year will be accepted into the program starting with the 2010-2011 class.
- The students will be accepted into KHOP in their senior year of high school.
- After completing their undergraduate studies at UNK, they automatically will be accepted into medical school at UNMC, provided they maintain an acceptable grade point average.
- The students will receive a tuition waiver for their time at UNK but will have to pay tuition and compete for scholarships when they get to UNMC.
- Acceptance into the program is based on academic standing, ACT scores, community involvement and a desire to return to rural Nebraska.

"On average more than 60 percent of RHOP graduates go on to practice in rural communities," said Jeff Hill, M.D., '77, associate dean for admissions and student affairs in the UNMC College of Medicine. "UNMC has demonstrated considerable success in building pipeline programs that target shortage areas. We're confident that the KHOP program will continue this tradition."

For more information contact: Peggy Abels, director of health science programs at UNK, (308) 865-8260, abelsp@unk.edu.

Wayne State College expands involvement in RHOP

The opportunity to pursue a career as an allied health professional just got easier for students in Nebraska. UNMC's School of Allied Health Professions (SAHP) recently expanded its participation in the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) to Wayne State College.

Since the inception of the RHOP program, the SAHP, unlike the other UNMC colleges, has only provided RHOP positions for students at Chadron State College. The addition of 10 total

positions at Wayne State College in physical therapy, physician assistant, clinical laboratory science and radiography education programs represents a 40 percent increase in available RHOP positions.

"The expansion of the allied health RHOP to Wayne State College is an indication of the SAHP's commitment to both the education and health of rural Nebraskans," said Kyle Meyer, Ph.D., '79, associate dean of the SAHP.



College of Medicine dean to step down

John Gollan, M.D., Ph.D., dean of the UNMC College of Medicine for nearly seven years, will step down as dean effective June 30 and return to a faculty post in the department of internal medicine as Stokes-Shackleford Professor.

UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., praised Dr. Gollan for his leadership and accomplishments as dean, which included:

- **Opening the Michael F. Sorrell Center for Health Science Education;**
- **Increasing the medical class size from 120 to 130 in 2008;**
- **Enhancing the quality of pediatric care in Nebraska through a 2007 affiliation agreement with Children’s Hospital & Medical Center.**

Considered one of the foremost hepatologists in the world, Dr. Gollan, 68, looks forward to new academic and clinical duties.



Skaters celebrate opening of ice rink

First-year medical student Krupa Savalia was all smiles as she laced her white skates and took to the ice Dec. 4 between classes.

“It’s really liberating,” said the New Jersey native, who used to skate competitively.

Along with the M.D., Ph.D., program, the rink “was a selling point,” Savalia said, because it sends a message that UNMC cares about its students, both in and out of the classroom.

Savalia was one of dozens of UNMC students, faculty and staff who celebrated the opening of UNMC’s new ice rink, which was made possible by a gift from Omaha philanthropists Ruth and Bill Scott.

The rink – part of UNMC’s student plaza near the Michael F. Sorrell Center for Health Science Education – is open to the public. The rink closes at the end of February.

UNMC to offer science classes to high school students



A future shortage of health care providers across Nebraska is prompting a community effort to prepare current high school students for health care careers.

An alliance between UNMC and eight Omaha area school districts and an educational service unit will give high school juniors and seniors an opportunity to take college-level science courses in preparation for careers in health care. The alliance will expose students to the varied opportunities in health care-related professions through coursework, hands-on experiences and mentoring, said Bob Barteo, UNMC vice chancellor for external affairs.

The courses – specifically designed for high school students – will be taught by UNMC faculty on the UNMC campus and rely on high school science teachers as collaborative partners. Some of the topics include innovation of medical technologies, medical decision-making and biomedical research. The courses expand on high school classes by allowing students to gain experience in clinic settings and work in labs with world-renowned UNMC researchers, faculty and staff.

While students must meet eligibility requirements, the alliance is open to all students in participating districts. The alliance will welcome its first group of 35 students this fall. The class is the first step toward the development of a health sciences high school in the Omaha metropolitan area.

Most of the courses offered in this program will be eligible for dual enrollment credit with the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

For more information, go to unmc.edu/alliance.htm

Grant to increase number of psychiatric nurse practitioners statewide

A three-year, \$1.18 million grant awarded to the UNMC College of Nursing by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will increase by 43 the number of psychiatric nurse practitioners available to diagnose and treat those with mental illnesses.

The grant creates access to two programs through enhanced distance education technology. The technology will enable students to complete

course and clinical requirements through Internet-based learning and videoconferencing systems. The programs are:

- **A 44-credit hour family psychiatric nurse practitioner master’s degree, which can be completed in four semesters; or**
- **A 20-credit family psychiatric nurse practitioner “Sprint Track” post master’s certificate designed for those who currently are nurse practitioners in rural areas. The program can be completed in two semesters of full-time study.**

Although there are about 1.7 million residents in Nebraska, there are only 211 psychiatrists, 46 psychiatric nurse practitioners and nine psychiatric physician assistants. About 68 percent practice in the Omaha/Lincoln areas, leaving 89 of the 93 counties designated as mental health workforce shortage areas.

