

# Bioterrorism Preparedness— Research on the Rise



*Harold M. Maurer, M.D., Chancellor*

This issue of *Discover* offers a substantive look at our bioterrorism preparedness efforts at UNMC. Although bioterrorism preparedness has become a focus of many academic health sciences centers since the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, UNMC's work in this area began years before those terrorist attacks, and we're well ahead of other medical centers in many key clinical, research and education areas.

We believe that our expertise, combined with many other factors, makes us the logical location for a National Emergency Preparedness Laboratory Center. This laboratory would augment the work of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Challenges lie ahead in making this happen, but we are making significant headway in the scientific community and in political circles.

On the following pages, you'll have an opportunity to read about why we think UNMC is the obvious choice to house the National Emergency Preparedness Laboratory Center. You'll see that we have many strategic strengths, in addition to our clinical, research and educational expertise.

In this space, I'd like to thank some of the many people who have really helped UNMC make its appeal to federal officials.

Our Congressional delegation, headed by Sens. Chuck Hagel and Ben Nelson, has been tremendous. Congressmen Lee Terry, Doug Bereuter and Tom Osborne also have battled for our cause. Gov. Mike Johanns, Lt. Gov. Dave Heineman and Nebraska's chief medical officer, Dr. Richard Raymond, also are to be commended for their leadership and support. As has been the case with several projects over the past couple of years, we've also had tremendous support from the private sector. People such as Chuck Durham, Walter Scott, Mike Yanney, John Gottschalk, Ken Stinson, Duane Acklie and Dick Davidson have been key allies in our quest for the emergency preparedness laboratory center.

This issue of *Discover* also highlights several programs at UNMC that have been honored recently in national publications. The students, faculty and staff of these programs are to be congratulated.

Our research enterprise was one such program. It was ranked 67<sup>th</sup> by the U.S. News and World Report. This ranking was based on seven factors, including peer assessment, selectivity, NIH funding, and faculty/student ratios.

To a layperson, 67<sup>th</sup> in the nation may not sound that impressive. However, this is the first time that UNMC has received a mention in these ratings, and it marks the university's entry into the top half of medical research institutions in the United States.

This ranking also shows that clinicians and scientists throughout the nation are taking notice of the excellent research that is taking place at UNMC.

Five years ago, UNMC had around \$30 million in external funding for research. We now have nearly \$60 million, and we want to boost that number to \$100 million by the end of 2005.

Some of you may wonder why I think research is so important. Simply, I feel that research fuels everything at the medical center. If we want to offer our patients the best treatments, we must be able to develop those treatments here. If we want to offer the best education, our students need to be with faculty working at the cutting edge of discovery.

In addition, research is an economic driver for the state. In these poor economic times, we need to continue to recruit world-class researchers and to further cultivate the current research taking place on campus.

*Harold M. Maurer, MD*