



## Health Reform Areas of Impact on Academic Health Centers

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### Health Innovation Zones offer Potential New Patient Delivery & Reimbursement Models

The law includes pilot programs to test new ways to efficiently deliver quality care. One model called the Healthcare Innovation Zone (HIZ) is a geographic region containing a teaching hospital, physicians, and other clinical entities that test ways to reduce the increasing cost of health care while improving quality. The law also authorizes pilot programs for "medical home" programs to find innovative approaches to provide more effective clinical teaching using a patient-centered team management approach.

*The UNMC Turner Park Clinic is an example of the "medical home" concept, where patients interact with many types of health providers to produce healthier outcomes.*

### Rural Physician Training

The law establishes a grant program for medical schools to establish, improve, or expand "rural-focused" training programs that meet certain specifications, including recruiting students most likely to practice in underserved rural communities.

*This program will allow UNMC to expand an existing program to encourage physicians to practice in the underserved areas (rural and some urban) of Nebraska. In Nebraska 51 of 93 counties have a shortage of primary care health professionals.*

### Physician Training & Workforce

The law reauthorized Title VII Health Professions programs for primary care medical and dental providers, public health, and allied health education and training. There will be a modest redistribution of the Graduate Medical Education residency slots. The law provides an income tax exclusion for health professionals participating in state-funded loan repayment programs which operate in Nebraska and 16 other states.

*To begin addressing the shortage of physicians, UNMC is gradually increasing enrollment in the College of Medicine to 135 students per class. The reauthorization and opportunity to obtain additional funding for medical residencies is important to increasing the class size.*

### Nurse Training & Workforce

The law expands eligibility for doctoral nursing students and enables them to receive additional funding through the Advanced Education Nursing Program and expands the Loan Repayment and Scholarship program for nurses who agree to serve as faculty after graduation. Also, the law increases the loan amount schools can offer students through the Nurse Faculty Loan Program and includes the Medicare Graduate Nurse Education Demonstration program, which is uniquely structured to address the need for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) in a new healthcare system. It will help fund clinical education, which has been one of the barriers to increasing enrollment.

*To address the nursing shortage, UNMC's College of Nursing has doubled the number of new students entering in the fall 2010 and accelerated the bachelor's degree program from five to four semesters.*

### Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER)

The law establishes an independent commission composed of physicians, health care providers and consumers to recommend research priorities to identify effective treatments and distribute results of scientific research to physicians for them to make decisions about care.

*Research funding at UNMC has increased by 22% to more than \$100 million during the past fiscal year. More than \$76 million of that funding is from federal sources. UNMC has research initiatives that could be*



*expanded and infrastructure to conduct more evidence-based research.*

### **Insurance to cover individual in Clinical Trials**

The law includes a provision to require all health plans, including the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, to cover routine patient costs associated with clinical trial participation. This could be beneficial to UNMC/NMC as an academic and research health facility.

### **Wellness Incentives**

The law will allow employers to offer employees who participate in wellness programs a discount of up to 30% on the cost of health coverage. The current federal regulation caps discounts at 20%. Wellness programs are effective in reducing chronic conditions and holding down the cost of health care.

*The Nebraska Medical Center estimates that its wellness program "SimplyWell" has reduced costs. In the last five years, TNMC's per-employee health costs have risen only 4.2% at a time when the national average is a 27.7% increase per employee.*

### **Area Health Education Centers**

The law reauthorized the Area Health Education Center program (AHECs) and changes the ongoing eligibility for federal funding from being state-based to center-based.

*There are five AHECs in Nebraska (Beatrice, Scottsbluff, Grand Island, Norfolk, Omaha) which focus on recruiting and promoting health professionals and community health needs. Two of Nebraska's AHECs are currently not eligible for funding. The change in eligibility from state-based to center-based will allow those two AHECs to apply for funding.*