

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

University of Nebraska UNK-UNMC Rural Health Education Building

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The University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) through the \$60 million federal American Rescue Plan Act funding appropriated in LB 1014 will establish a facility - the Nebraska Rural Healthcare Education building - in Kearney, Nebraska that will recruit, educate, and train individuals to work in a broad range of health care professions including nursing, medicine, allied health, and more.

This proposal as outlined in LB 721 (2022), seeks to provide both a public health response and address negative economic impacts to both individual and the health care industry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nebraska's health care clinics and hospitals had to take extraordinary measures during the pandemic to provide the necessary care to Nebraskans, but were limited due ongoing staffing shortages. With pending retirements from the health care industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic, rural Nebraska residents seeking health care in their communities are more limited and must travel more to receive their care.

With the establishment of the UNK-UNMC Nebraska Rural Healthcare Education building, the University will be able to increase the labor pool of medical and health care professionals across rural Nebraska in key areas and assist the health care industry in maintaining critical access hospital and health care infrastructure. This public health response of expanding medical services and care to rural Nebraskans is critical to not only mitigating COVID-19, but also assist Nebraska in preparing for the next health care-related pandemic.

The training and education provided in this rural facility will also be directly connected to preceptorships in rural clinics and hospitals to connect to the goal of rural career placement upon graduation. This model, which is already deployed at the UNMC Health Sciences Education Complex at the UNK campus, has helped place roughly 80% of graduates from nursing and allied health programs in rural Nebraska.

Based on widely-used research from UNMC, rural areas of Nebraska have faced significant disparities in access to health careⁱ and significant shortages across many health care professionsⁱⁱ. The COVID-19 public health response through the UNK-UNMC Rural Healthcare Education building and accompanying programmatic expansions will help the State of Nebraska both prepare the needed health care workforce and make health care more accessible to rural Nebraskans.

ⁱ <https://www.unmc.edu/rural-health/documents/ruralhealth2030.pdf>

ⁱⁱ https://www.unmc.edu/rural-health/documents/Workforce_2020.pdf