



Lincoln



Omaha



Kearney



Medical Center

## University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) School of Allied Health Professions (SAHP)

Allied health is a collective term used to describe numerous health professions provide vital diagnostic and treatment services, or use leading-edge medical technologies to derive essential data for diagnosis or evaluating treatment effectiveness. It has been estimated that allied health professionals constitute up to 60% of the approximately 12 million workers in the health care sector. The University of Nebraska Medical Center's School of Allied Health Professions (SAHP) has been educating allied health professionals to serve Nebraska since 1972. Established by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska as an entity of the College of Medicine on the UNMC campus, the SAHP currently comprises twelve health professions programs,\* with a total enrollment of almost 400 students.

### School of Allied Health Professions

- Currently 49 faculty and 19 staff
- Mean GPA for students admitted into the SAHP typically ranges from 3.5-3.75 for the 12 programs.
- Currently the SAHP is able to accept only approximately 25% of applicants to its professional programs.
- Approximately 40% of Nebraska applicants to the SAHP programs are from rural designated Nebraska counties.
- SAHP programs in clinical laboratory science, physician assistant, physical therapy, and radiography have participated in the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) since its inception, and almost 40% of *all UNMC RHOP graduates* are from those four programs.
- Of those SAHP RHOP graduates, 54% are actively practicing in rural Nebraska, including 67% of physician assistant graduates.
- In 2010, the SAHP more than doubled available early admission slots for rural students with the addition of 5 KHOP positions at UNK and 10 more RHOP students per year at Wayne State College (WSC) in addition to the existing 13 RHOP positions offered at Chadron State College (CSC).
- SAHP has an annual operating budget of \$7.3 million, with 22% from state general funds, and the balance from campus resources, grants and contracts.

\* *Cardiovascular Interventional Technology, Clinical Laboratory Science, Clinical Perfusion, Computed Tomography/Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Cytotechnology, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Medical Nutrition, Nuclear Medicine Technology, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant, Radiation Therapy, and Radiography*

Health care delivery in the United States is currently confronted with a number of complex factors, many of which disproportionately impact rural areas. These factors include a need to expand access to primary care services, an aging population, increasing workforce demands, and an increased emphasis on prevention, wellness and living with chronic disease. These conditions, coupled with large, highly qualified applicant pools, support the expansion of allied health professional education to UNK to positively impact the health of Nebraska's citizens. Collocating with the UNMC College of Nursing in a state-of-the-art facility on the UNK campus would greatly enhance interprofessional education and the use of simulation to train health care professionals.

## Workforce Demand

- By 2018 the *U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics* projects national employment demand will increase 39% for physician assistants, 30% for physical therapists, 18% for diagnostic medical sonographers, 17% for radiographers, and 14% for clinical laboratory scientists. These projections translate to an additional need of over 152,000 allied health professionals in these five professions alone.
- Thirteen Nebraska counties have no medical radiographer, 24 counties have no physician assistant, and 25 counties have no physical therapist.
- Only 26 Nebraska counties have a physical therapist to population ratio higher than the national average.
- Approximately one-third of physician assistants and physical therapists licensed in Nebraska are between the ages of 46 and 65 years.
- Turnover rates for these five professions in Nebraska's hospitals in 2011 ranged from approximately 7% to 11%.
- The number of adults age 65 years and older will almost double between 2005 and 2030, from 37 million to over 70 million, accounting for almost 20% of the U.S. population.
- In 2010 the proportion of the population over 65 years of age in the U.S. was 13.0%, while the proportion in rural Nebraska was 16.3%. The population over age 65 in Nebraska is projected to increase by 61.9% by 2030.
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that approximately 80% of older adults have one chronic condition, and 50% have at least two. Additionally, total joint replacements are projected to increase nationwide from a current annual level of 600,000 to over 4 million in 2030.

The inter-campus partnership with UNK is intended to help address current and projected allied health workforce shortages in rural Nebraska by allowing students interested in rural health to have the opportunity to obtain a health professions education without the necessity of relocating to Omaha. UNMC's experience of over 20 years has demonstrated that if students interested in rural practice are provided opportunities to obtain their education in rural communities, they have a greater likelihood of returning to those communities to practice after graduation. The UNK/UNMC Health Science Education Complex would allow for the expansion of SAHP educational programs to the UNK campus beginning with the fall semester of the 2015-16 academic year in the fields of clinical laboratory science, diagnostic medical sonography, physician assistant, physical therapy, and radiography, while further investigating the feasibility of additional professional education programs.

## UNK/UNMC Health Education Complex

- The new education complex will likely attract a greater number of students from Central and Western Nebraska interested in obtaining professional healthcare education in closer proximity to the rural areas in which they intend to practice.
- Enrollment increases of 10% to 20% in the five programs, phased in over a four-year implementation period, would result in a total increase in enrollment at UNK of approximately 50 allied health professions students.
- The SAHP has historically enjoyed tremendous support from Nebraska's health care institutions for the provision of clinical education. Over 100 health care organizations (hospitals and clinics) located in rural Nebraska counties currently provide clinical education support for the five specified allied health education programs. Approximately 40 of these sites are located in Kearney, Grand Island, Hastings, Holdrege, Cozad, Gothenburg, Lexington, North Platte, McCook, and Broken Bow.