



## UNMC part of state's bioterrorism preparedness team

by Karen Burbach, UNMC public affairs

Nebraska's success in bioterrorism preparation stems from its teamwork among government, academia and the private sector, Gov. Dave Heineman said Thursday in presenting the Harry W. McFadden, Jr., M.D., Lectureship.

"We lead the nation in putting everyone on one team," Heineman said to a large crowd in the Durham Research Center Auditorium, where he joins the distinct list of McFadden lecturers, which includes three Nobel laureates. "We're going to be the national champions when it comes to bioterrorism preparedness."

Heineman praised UNMC's role in advancing the Nebraska Model, "an integrated, coordinated and comprehensive" preparedness plan that spans everything from information technology and transportation to agriculture and academia.

UNMC has played a pivotal role in bioterrorism preparedness since 1997 when the public health lab moved to campus, Heineman said.

Shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, Heineman, then lieutenant governor and director of Nebraska's homeland security, appointed UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., and Steven Hinrichs, M.D., UNMC professor and director of the University of Nebraska Center for Biosecurity, to his homeland security advisory group.

"We knew from day one we needed to think outside the box and involve more people," he said.

As a result, new alliances have been formed out of collaborations between government, academia and the private sector with the goal of being vigilant and prepared in the event of an emergency.

[Click here](#) to watch the lecture.



UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., Harry McFadden Jr., M.D., Gov. Dave Heineman and Sam Cohen, M.D., Ph.D. Photos by Jim Birrell.



Gov. Dave Heineman presents the 2005 McFadden lecture.

On Thursday, Heineman also touted the work of such UNMC programs as the Health Professions Tracking Center and the Center for Biopreparedness Education.

"UNMC is a Nebraska treasure," Heineman said. "It's an extraordinary institution that is doing incredible things for this state and for our nation."

Highlights of the Nebraska Model include:

- A newly opened 10-bed biocontainment unit in The Nebraska Medical Center's University Tower. One of only three in the nation, the biocontainment unit is a collaborative effort with the state Health and Human Services System. It is the largest unit in the country.
- The sharing of information technology infrastructure between the University of Nebraska and the Department of Administrative Services, to provide back-up capability in case of an emergency
- The integration of the private sector into the bioterrorism-preparedness network. For example,

selected semi-trailer drivers now are trained to report suspicious activities on Nebraska highways.

- Nationally acclaimed education programs administered through the Center for Bioterrorism Education, a joint effort between UNMC, Creighton University and the state of Nebraska.
- The coordination of all bioterrorism preparedness-related projects between key partners such as the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, the Nebraska State Patrol and the National Guard, so all participants know priorities.

Despite the state's progress and the recognition it has received nationally, the work continues, Heineman said. "We can't stand still. Everyday we have to improve the system. but, as governor, I am enormously proud of what our state has accomplished and extraordinarily proud of what this medial center has done. Without you we wouldn't be national leaders."



Tony Sambol, left, Gov. Dave Heineman, and Ann Fruhling, Ph.D., University of Nebraska at Omaha's Peter Kiewit Institute, view STATPack, an electronic consultation system which allows laboratories to exchange information and view diagnostic samples that are unusual or complex. Rhonda Noel, a medical technologist in UNMC's Department of Pathology and Microbiology, sits at the computer.



Harry McFadden Jr., M.D., Sam Cohen, M.D.,  
Ph.D., and Harold M. Maurer, M.D.

Henry W. McFadden Jr., 85, received his medical degree from UNMC, and joined the faculty in 1949 as an instructor in pathology and bacteriology. He became professor and chairman of the Department of Medical Microbiology in 1956 and chaired the department until his retirement in 1985, when the department merged with the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. During his tenure, Dr. McFadden received many local awards, and served on several state and national boards. On the national level, he was elected to the Council on Microbiology of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists, serving as its chairman for two years. He also is a former trustee and president of the American Board of Pathology.

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