



Transforming Senior Care

UNMC's new Home Instead Center for Successful Aging promises to break new ground in caring for an aging population

The treatment plan for a geriatric patient dealing with Alzheimer's or recovering from a stroke rarely fits into one neat compartment.

In addition to medical appointments, treatment also involves addressing psychiatric issues, coordinating a number of prescriptions, and dealing with changes in social interactions.

The Home Instead Center for Successful Aging at the University of Nebraska Medical Center was built to break down the walls between those compartments and create a new vision to provide integrated care for senior citizens.

Located at the corner of 38th Avenue and Leavenworth Streets, the three-story building has 31,425 square feet of space. This new home for both the division of geriatric medicine and geriatric psy-

chiatry at UNMC also includes:

- The medical clinic, which has eight exam rooms on the main level.
- The geriatric psychiatry clinic, which has one exam room on the main level. Offices for faculty/fellows double as exam rooms. Nurse practitioners also are located here.
- The Wellness Center - Community Education and Outreach area, which house a fully equipped fitness and exercise area and a multi-purpose room for public and professional education. In addition to regular weekday hours, this area also will have weekend and early evening hours.
- The center's environment makes it conducive for clinical trials for Alzheimer's disease and other geriatric-specific disorders.

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Right: Paul and Laurie Hogan of Home Instead Senior (right side of photo) and UNMC officials participate in the ribbon cutting for the Center for Successful Aging. Above: A look inside the center.



- Academic and faculty offices are on the upper level floor.
- Patient and caregiver education facilities are located on the lower level.

The Home Instead Center opened to the public on Sept. 13. The opening ceremonies July 25 marked the culmination of a long-held dream for Jane Potter, M.D., professor and chief of the division of geriatrics at UNMC, and other geriatric care providers on campus.

The building is funded by \$10.2 million in private donations and is named for Home Instead Senior Care, the world's largest private provider of non-medical home care to seniors. Home Instead was co-founded by the center's principal donors, Lori and Paul Hogan, who made their gift through the University of Nebraska Foundation.

"We share a common goal with UNMC, Dr. Potter and her team – to help people age more successfully. That's why this distinct rela-

tionship between Home Instead and UNMC holds such tremendous promise," said Paul Hogan, founder and chairman of Home Instead Senior Care. "We are confident that by working together, we can find solutions to truly help seniors age more successfully."

Sharon Brangman, M.D., president of the American Geriatrics Society, attended the opening ceremonies. She praised UNMC and Home Instead for their proactive approach to senior care.

The center and its role in educating future geriatric health care providers is particularly important as the U.S. prepares for what Dr. Brangman called the "Silver Tsunami," a reference to the 79 million baby boomers who soon will become senior citizens.

To meet this need, said Dr. Potter, the U.S. will need to train more than 30,000 geriatricians.

"Only .5 percent of nurses are trained in geriatric care, and only a

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Boys Town National Research Hospital Welcomes Sharad Kunnath, M.D.



Dr. Kunnath is a Pediatric Gastroenterologist

*specializing in the digestive system of infants,
children and adolescents.*

Dr. Kunnath is Board Certified in Pediatrics with a subspecialty in Pediatric Gastroenterology. He received his medical degree from Christian Medical College in India, completed his Pediatric Residency at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and completed a Pediatric Gastroenterology Fellowship at Harbor Children's Hospital at Brown University in Rhode Island.

Dr. Sharad Kunnath joins Dr. Laurel Presbridge
and Dr. Jan Vonderhase.



Sharad Kunnath, M.D.

Boys Town Pediatric Gastroenterology

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small percentage of pharmacists are trained to work with this population. Yet more than 25 percent of all pharmaceuticals are consumed by seniors," she said.

"Older adults are the largest per capita users of prescription drugs and are most at risk for adverse drug reactions," added Courtney V. Fletcher, dean of the UNMC College of Pharmacy. "The Home Instead Center will address this health care challenge, and many others facing the aging American population, through an interdisciplinary, comprehensive, team-based approach.

"This center offers not just the promise, but also the reality of a better health care future for older adults," Fletcher said.

Dr. Potter presented the idea for the center to more than 350 fellows in the American Geriatric Society at a conference earlier this year in Orlando, Fla. The response was overwhelmingly positive.

"This is what academic medical center campuses need to do to encourage inter-professional training and to meet the growing demand," she said. "The Home Instead Center is the only facility in the region focused on successful aging that is located on a major teaching campus with inter-professional faculty and students from all disciplines learning how to care for the aging."

Currently, there are eight geriatric physicians, five geriatric psychiatrists and one geriatric psychologist on faculty at UNMC. Gerontology and geriatric medicine have been part of the UNMC medical school curriculum since 1981. Training in geriatrics has been mandatory for internal medicine and family medicine residents for more than 20 years.

While educating health care providers about the special needs of geriatric patients, Dr. Potter also wants to teach these students about the rewards of treating them as well.

"The Home Instead Center is the first to be located at the heart of a medical center campus, allowing students to see the joys of geriatric medicine and hopefully influencing their decision to pursue it as a career," Dr. Potter said. "By locating on campus we are not out of sight, out of mind, so we will be able to rewrite the hidden curriculum regarding aging."

Dr. Potter hopes that students being exposed to these "vibrant, interesting people" will lead to more of them specializing in this field.

"Geriatric medicine is consistently ranked as the most satisfying field in medicine," Dr. Potter said. "It's enormously gratifying."