

*Perkins County Health Services and Grant Pharmacy among preceptor sites offering educational experiences for thousands of UNMC students.*

The Rural Health Education Network (RHEN), which was developed by the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the Nebraska Legislature to provide educational opportunities for health profession students, is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

By creating RHEN and forming partnerships with communities across the state, UNMC was able to develop a network of volunteer faculty to serve as preceptors for its students.

RHEN allows students to receive part of their professional education in sites away from the main UNMC campus. Almost all UNMC students experience a rural rotation at some point in their education. In 2010, more than 530 UNMC students participated in 854 rural rotations in 74 Nebraska communities.

UNMC College of Medicine alumnus and RHEN director, Patrik Johansson, M.D., M.P.H., spoke glowingly of the RHEN program from his own personal perspective.

“When I was a medical student, my rural rotations in Sidney and Gordon exposed me to the breadth of primary care, and I became acutely aware of rural health professions shortages,” he said. “These factors strongly influenced me to pursue a career in public health and in my capacity as RHEN director work toward addressing health professions workforce shortages in rural Nebraska.”

There are currently 95 Nebraska communities and 324 organizations who serve as rural rotation sites (located outside Douglas, Sarpy and Lancaster counties) for UNMC students.

They provide educational training for the following UNMC programs—clinical laboratory science, dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, physician assistant, physical therapy and radiography.

The preceptor sites include:

Grant Pharmacy and Perkins County Health Services in Grant.