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Bulletin of the University of Nebraska: Better Health in Nebraska, 1928

University of Nebraska College of Medicine

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BETTER HEALTH

for Nebraska

**BULLETIN OF
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OF NEBRASKA**

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BETTER HEALTH FOR NEBRASKA

The doctor shook his head sadly. "I'm afraid, madam, that we can do nothing for your baby. It is one of those unfortunate mistakes of nature. To even attempt an operation would be — ah, well — I don't see how it could help but prove fatal. It seems as though the baby can live but a few months ———."

The little patient was seven months old. It was bright, cheerful, and quite normal except for a grave physical defect. At the base of the spine there was a growth as big as a small grapefruit. The spinal cord was inside of this growth. Sooner or later the growth must break and death result. The home doctors had given the case up.

"If some great specialist could be found, I'm sure my baby could be saved," the mother had often thought to herself. But that could be only a dream, for the family was poor and to seek out such a man seemed impossible.

One doctor had suggested that if anyone could do anything for the baby, it would be someone at the Medical College of the University of Nebraska at Omaha. So as a last resort, application was made for the admission of the little patient to that hospital. Shortly, the letter came, stating that the baby might be brought in at once.



Contented babies, all born under the auspices of the University of Nebraska. The Medical College regularly looks after the future welfare of the babies it has brought into the world.

BETTER HEALTH



Patients must be kept happy and occupied at the University of Nebraska hospital.

For several days the baby was kept under observation at the hospital, while the doctors busied themselves with conferences as to what should be done about the case.

Finally it was decided to operate. What an anxious day that was for the parents, hoping against hope that the baby would survive! And what a trying day it was for the surgeons! Two solid hours were required for the delicate dissection of the nerves and the replacement of the lower end of the spinal cord back into its normal position.

What apprehensive days for the parents and nurses were to follow. But slowly the baby gained strength and in thirty days was entirely well. Now it is learning to talk and walk.

Really now, Mr. and Mrs. Citizen of Nebraska, isn't it a great thing to feel that you, thru the payment of your taxes, had a very definite part in saving the life of this child?

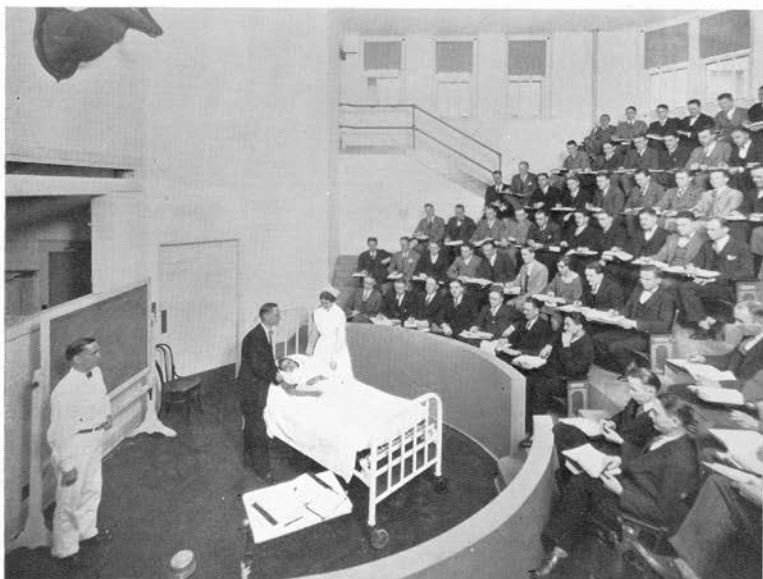
But this baby was just one of the 3,000 patients who were admitted to the hospital during the year 1927. From all sections of the state they came, from the ranch of the sandhills and from the little home in southeast Nebraska, people impoverished both physically and financially,

BETTER HEALTH

people who in many cases would simply have to be left to die or become county charges, were it not for the University of Nebraska hospital. Five thousand other people came to the college for treatment from day to day during the year but did not stay at the hospital.

The cures accomplished at this hospital have been heralded far and wide, giving the institution a reputation for thoroughness in its clinic. One hundred of the best doctors in Nebraska have been giving their time and energy free of charge to hospital, patients and students, in assisting the full time faculty of the college.

The 125 beds provided at the hospital are always full and there is a long waiting list. With the completion of the new wing to the main building, the capacity of the hospital will be doubled. Putting it fully to use only awaits an appropriation for operating expenses, which will cost each person in Nebraska an average of ten cents a year.



The fine points of a difficult case at the University of Nebraska hospital.

BETTER HEALTH

It was a brilliant thought on someone's part that made the College of Medicine a great medical center for helping the sick poor of the state, but the college has other great purposes as well. In the first place, a college of medicine associated with any great university must always be a center of medical leadership. The average doctor is so rushed with his private practice that he has little time left for research or development of new methods in treating disease. Such matters must be left largely to the institution with facilities for research.

But we must not forget that any medical college is also an institution which instructs and trains the young doctor, otherwise the institution would not be a college. It is never possible for the college to accept, with its present facilities, all the medical students or nurses who would enter for training. This year there were 300 medical students enrolled and there is a graduating class of sixty-five. One hundred student nurses were enrolled. There are 400 alumni of the college practicing medicine in the state — Nebraska is one of the few states which is adequately supplied with physicians in the smaller communities. Nebraska has a high health record, a matter due in no small measure to the influence of the college and its graduates.

SPEAKING OF OPERATIONS

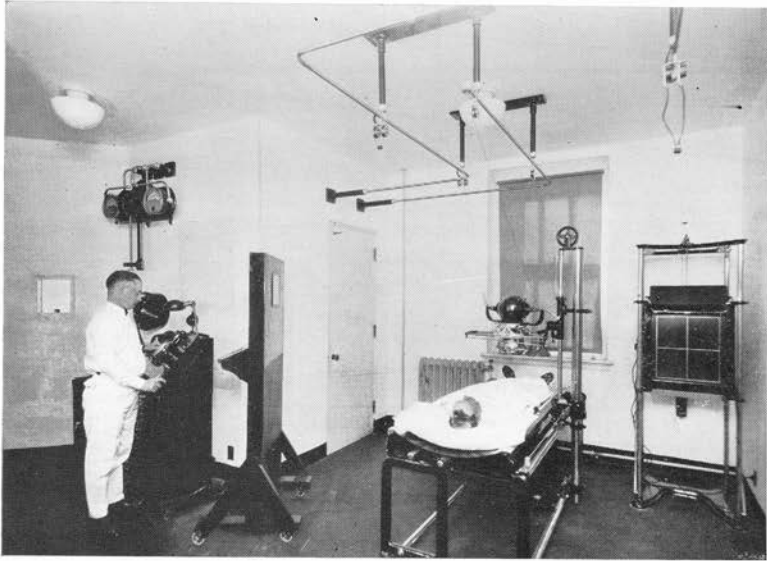
Because of its more spectacular nature and because of its close association to the people of the state, the work of the hospital and the outpatient department naturally receives most attention.

Forty-three thousand hospital days represents the grand total of service afforded the poor of the state during the year 1927, which means in ordinary language that each of the 3,000 patients spent on the average about fourteen days in the hospital. During the year 1,000 minor surgical operations and 500 major operations were performed, while 43,000 visits were made by the doctors to patients in the hospital. Two thousand x-ray examinations and treatments were given, while 10,000 prescriptions were filled and as many laboratory tests made. Three hundred and thirty-eight babies were born at the hospital.

More than 5,000 patients were cared for at the dispensary or outpatient department. This is where those who are able to come for office

BETTER HEALTH

examination and treatment are cared for. Sometimes as many as 150 patients visit the dispensary in a day. They are of all types, but are alike in being in need of treatment and in having little to pay for it. These 5,000 patients made 35,000 visits and each visit was attended by a physician who received nothing for his services.



X-ray treatment at the University of Nebraska hospital.

The cost of the free medical services if appraised at private patient rates would total more than three-quarters of a million dollars. Yet even this does not represent the real value to the patients, for the saving of life and the restoration to health of many patients cannot be measured in money.

Many cures of the crippled and lame are made every week. Children who have had infantile paralysis are enabled to walk again. An example is of a girl of fourteen who was so crippled that she could move about only by creeping on all fours. Nine operations were performed for the loosening and transplantation of tendons, and the straightening of the

BETTER HEALTH

joints. She left the hospital erect and smiling, able to walk with the aid of crutches. Life looks greatly different to her than when she could only crawl on the floor.

In another case a boy was rapidly becoming so bow-legged that soon he would be unable to walk at all. Now, thanks to the University hospital, he can walk as well as any other boy. A young woman had one leg shorter than the other. By skillful surgery, the shorter leg was lengthened to match the other.

The wonderful cures of general surgery, as in operations for a ruptured appendix, perforated gastric ulcers, serious infections, goiters, and the like are too numerous to describe. There is no field of surgery which is not represented by an eminent specialist at the University hospital. Even brain surgery is not uncommon. There was a woman with a large family who was going blind from a brain tumor which was pressing on the optic nerve. In addition, she suffered terrible headaches and was prostrated with weakness. The brain tumor was removed, vision was restored almost immediately, and she returned home able to read and sew and take care of her family.



Examining babies at the clinic. The clinic of the University of Nebraska is one of the best in the Mississippi valley.

BETTER HEALTH



As soon as funds are made available the new wing of the hospital will be fully operated thereby doubling the capacity of the institution.

In another case a veteran of the Spanish-American war was suffering so much from tri-facial neuralgia that he was unable to work or eat without excruciating pain. So the most difficult operation of cutting the offending nerve at the base of the brain was resorted to, permanently relieving him of suffering.

Not all the cures are in surgery. Many heart and kidney conditions, with extensive dropsy, are relieved so that the wage-earner is able to go back to work. Diabetes is controlled by the use of the wonderful new drug, insulin, and education of the patient in the regulation of the diet. A little girl of five had diabetes, and would have died within a year if she had not received care at the University hospital during a three months' stay. During this time the mother was instructed in the regulation of the girl's diet at home, and the little girl is happy and active today.

PATIENTS FROM ALL PARTS OF STATE

The patients come from all parts of the state. Each county is entitled to a certain number of eligible patients, or a certain number of hospital days. The number of days is based on the population of the county. Cases admitted must be instructive in medical teaching, and if chronic or incurable, cannot be admitted or kept in the hospital more than a week or two, in order to make room for patients who can be benefitted.

BETTER HEALTH

the right road to childhood. Senior students of the college under the supervision of the faculty make trips to all parts of Omaha to visit poor families in need of medical attention.

"I have never known of a case coming under the care of the Medical College of the University of Nebraska which did not receive the best of attention," a social worker remarked the other day.



It is never possible for the Medical College to accept all the students who apply for entrance.

SERVICE OF THE COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

When a man goes to see the family dentist, he usually does not consider that he is, in many cases, materially aiding his health, but he usually goes to have some defect corrected which is giving him immediate pain. In many cases, however, other bodily ills are also corrected indirectly by the dentist.

Possibly one of the worst afflictions which might affect a sturdy boy of high school age would be inability to play football. That was the plight one promising gridster found himself in recently when an attack

BETTER HEALTH

of rheumatism made it impossible for him to play the game. Eventually it was found that an abscessed tooth was causing all the trouble. After the offending tooth had been removed, the boy's rheumatism left him and he was soon able to join his pals on the football gridiron.

In some cases, offending teeth have made it necessary for people to give up, at least temporarily, their professions. In the private practice of one rather prominent dentist, there was a woman who was insistent on having some work done the dentist said was unnecessary. This doctor was doing the work for the woman, under protest, when he noticed that the joints of her fingers were swollen. He informed her that she had arthritis and suggested that she have a number of her teeth removed. After some discussion of the subject, most of her teeth were removed and she was fitted with a plate. Several months later the woman returned to the office of the dentist and told him that the swelling had gone out of her hands and that she was now able to resume her work as a seamstress, which she had been forced to give up because of the swollen condition of her hands.

Another case was still more striking. One afternoon, a working man came into the office of a dentist in one of the larger cities of Nebraska and had some work done on his teeth. During his conversation with the dentist, he told the dentist that he had formerly been a garage worker, but because of his health, he was being forced to accept an outdoor job operating a tractor in Colorado.

He said that his heart was troubling him, attributing his ailment to the monoxide gas found around a garage. He also mentioned that he was afflicted with rheumatism, while the dentist in the course of his work found that he had a bad case of pyorrhea.

The doctor told the patient that he believed that the rheumatism was caused by the condition of his teeth and suggested that he have a number of the diseased ones removed. The mechanic consented and most of the teeth were removed, a few at a time. When the dental trouble had been corrected, the rheumatism and later the heart trouble, which was associated with it, left the man, permitting him to resume his work in a garage, where he is still at work after a number of years.

BETTER HEALTH

Such services to the people of the state are constantly being rendered by the graduates and clinic of the College of Dentistry of the University of Nebraska.

DIRECT SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

The story of the services of the College of Dentistry to the state, to be complete, must be in the form of an evaluation of both the direct service and the indirect service. Under the heading of "direct service"



Dental clinic of the University of Nebraska. Soon new quarters will be available.

it should be stated that the College of Dentistry annually treats from 3,500 to 4,000 individuals. The actual number for 1926-27, an average year, was 3,677, for whom 11,231 operations were performed. This work necessitated 33,797 sittings. About 2,500 teeth were extracted. About 30 cases of straightening irregular teeth are handled annually.

The College of Dentistry cares for the dental ills of the wards of the State Home for Dependent Children and the Orthopedic hospital. Where such work does not require the use of gold, it is done without charge. During this school year, up to March, 1928, 400 teeth have

BETTER HEALTH

been extracted for the health department of the City of Lincoln. Most of these teeth were infected and were retarding the recovery of these patients.

Two hundred and seven dentists were graduated during the period of the College's association with the University between 1904 and 1918. Since 1918, at which time the college became an integral part of the University, 198 graduates have been given their degrees, or a total of 405 for the two periods. This is an annual average of 22 for the last nine-year period. Ninety-six and one-half per cent of these men have located in Nebraska. It is impossible to estimate the indirect service that this body of dentists have rendered the state.

An account of an experiment at Cleveland, Ohio, will stimulate one's imagination. Schools were selected in which the home conditions were as nearly alike as it is possible to attain. In one group no preventive dental education or urging of dental attention was given, while in the other a systematic program of dental education and attention was carried on. The pupils of the latter averaged one-half year less to complete the eight grades than those of the former.

Another form of service to the state that should be considered is the public service rendered by the faculty and graduates. This consists of a citizenship service in the community in which these dentists are located; the publicity brought to the state and to the University by appearance on dental programs of national note; a dental educational program for the dental profession and an educational program of prevention for those outside of the profession. Nebraska is reputed to have one of the best dental licensing laws in the United States. This means the best possible work for the public. The dentists of Nebraska were a potent factor in securing such legislation.

In the field of preventive dental service, members of the faculty carried a good share of the program of the Dental Health Week conducted by the Lincoln Dental Society in March, 1926. Members of the faculty are constantly invited to speak to Parent-Teacher association groups, while members have appeared in more than 50 radio talks on preventive dentistry.

BETTER HEALTH

These points have merely outlined the service rendered to the state by the faculty and graduates of the College of Dentistry of the University of Nebraska. It is hoped that they will stimulate the imagination to visualize the indirect service.

THE WORK IN PHARMACY

An exciting pursuit down the streets of one of the larger cities of the state by police officers one Saturday night last winter was the result of the realization by a druggist of that city of the confidence placed in her by the state and national governments.

In checking over her narcotic prescriptions, the woman druggist observed that there were two prescriptions in the same hand-writing from different doctors. A check with the two doctors revealed that one of the prescriptions was a forgery. After trying to recall the faces of those to whom she had issued the narcotics, the woman druggist finally decided on one individual to whom she believed she had issued the drug.

Biding her time, the druggist awaited the return for a second time of the forger. Sure enough, one Saturday night, about 8 o'clock, two women came into the drugstore, which was situated in the downtown section of the city, and presented a prescription. While going to fill the order, the druggist called the police station and plain clothes officers answered the call. Following their arrival, the two women suspects became alarmed and attempted to escape, running thru the streets of the downtown section, one being captured at once and the other escaping, only to be apprehended later.

Such activity makes the druggist feel the responsibility which has been placed upon his shoulders by the government in the dispensing of drugs. There are more laws binding the druggist than any other class of men. Even the druggist does not always fully realize the responsibility which has been placed on his shoulders.

At the University of Nebraska, the primary function of the College of Pharmacy is to train young men and women in a way that will enable them to give the best pharmaceutical service to the communities in which they intend to live. Just what pharmaceutical service consists of seems

BETTER HEALTH

to be a rather indefinite thing in the mind of the average citizen. He realizes that the trained druggist performs certain very important functions. The compounding of prescriptions; the supplying, in standardized form, of poisons for the control of plant and animal pests in the horticultural, agricultural, and animal husbandry industries; the supplying of home remedies and home formulas; the distribution of narcotic drugs for both medical and industrial purposes; and the supplying of reliable goods for the care of the sick are all functions of the druggist which call for the finest type of intelligence and training. There are also other fields in which the pharmacist operates which are less sharply defined than those mentioned. It was with the thought in mind of clearly defining this field, that the directors of the Commonwealth Fund, about three years ago undertook the study of finding out the demands that are actually made upon the druggist of today.

This study, in the field of what the druggist actually has to do, brought out the fact that the modern druggist has in addition to the functions which have been named, several other groups of duties and responsibilities.

A LEADER IN THE COMMUNITY

In the first place he must be a man as well as a pharmacist. In the mind of the public he belongs to the more intelligent group of men in the community and as such must assume as a citizen a position of leadership. He must possess the qualities of intelligent and forceful manhood and he must be trained in these extra-vocational activities so that he may assume this leadership. Since the establishment of the work in pharmacy almost 20 years ago, this phase of the training of the pharmacists has been especially stressed. It has been the aim of the University to broaden the pharmacist's contacts and widen his field of vision in order that he may be sympathetic with every phase of community life.

The Commonwealth study also shows that if a druggist is successfully to perform his work, his character and personality are of primary importance and along with these he must develop a professional morale to a high degree. He must also show a high degree of efficiency in handling people. He must learn to live with them with kindness and

BETTER HEALTH

forcefulness and he must have a high regard for those rules of professional ethics that have stood the test of time and have demonstrated their fundamental value. Those traits which a person must have to fill his functions as a druggist successfully are well known. It is the purpose of the University to so train the student that these traits will be strengthened so as to increase the druggist's efficiency.



No, the University is not always decked out for a party. This is part of the exhibit during Pharmacy Week.

No one questions the druggist's right to compound prescriptions intelligently or his right to sell material for the control of insects, fungi, parasites, vermin, and for the purpose of fumigation. The vast amount of knowledge and technical training which is necessary for the druggist to fulfill this function is seldom appreciated. Even before he can take up the study of these subjects, it is necessary for him to have a thoro training in the basic medical sciences.

The most important thing which the Commonwealth study brought out was the fact that the pharmacist is more strategically situated than any other individual to give personal advice upon matters of public health. The information is given free and the pharmacist can always be reached

BETTER HEALTH

by the public and the materials necessary for controlling the health problems are always in stock. If the pharmacist is well informed he is the best single individual to disseminate information about public health. Of course the pharmacist must be trained in health matters so that he will be able to recognize the dangerous from the trivial. This is the very thing that the University does.

One of the most outstanding functions of the pharmacist is to see to it that the regulations of the national and state governments with reference to the sale of narcotics, alcohol, and poisons are carried out. This responsibility has been placed upon the druggist by the government and it is the function of the University to see to it that its graduates in pharmacy are both informed regarding this law and are imbued with the proper ideals.

Such is the picture of the typical pharmacist, which the College of Pharmacy of the University of Nebraska has trained, is training, and proposes to continue training. He is a man with interests and obligations outside his profession and his personality and character should be of high degree. In his profession he buys and sells a wide variety of products; he fills prescriptions and manufactures those products which it is not advisable to purchase. He assists in control of all kinds of pests and diseases. He is a valuable source of information on public health and other scientific matters. As a pharmacist, he intelligently reads the authoritative treatises of his profession; he endeavors to understand and obey the laws of his country; and he continually endeavors to keep abreast of his profession.

The accomplishment of such a purpose may well be considered to be the primary function of the College of Pharmacy of the University of Nebraska.

WHAT THE UNIVERSITY IS DOING

This pamphlet is one of a series telling in popular fashion of the work of the University of Nebraska. Other pamphlets now available are:

BETTER LIVING FOR NEBRASKA. *How the newer knowledge of nutrition and other developments in home economics are being passed along to the women of Nebraska.*

BETTER BUSINESS FOR NEBRASKA. *How the average citizen may profit from the work in business administration.*

BETTER HEALTH FOR THE STUDENT. *What the University does to conserve and improve the health of the student body. The other side of athletics, or intra-mural activities.*

The University of Nebraska welcomes the opportunity to be of greater service to the State of Nebraska. It will be glad to send these pamphlets to interested persons upon request.

Societies and organizations which are desirous of learning more of the practical side of the University's work may, upon request, secure a speaker from the University faculty.
Address

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