

Report on patient fee disclosure on regents' slate

By Mary Jo Fitzl

Discussion on further disclosure of patient fees at the University of Nebraska Medical Center is slated for the NU Board of Regents meeting this Saturday according to NU Corporate Secretary William Swanson.

Lack of public knowledge of the fees doctors at the medical center receive from referred patients has raised questions from the Legislature's Appropriations Committee and has caused a regents committee to prepare a report on the issue.

At Saturday's meeting, the regents committee will present a report proposing changes in the medical service plan, Swanson said.

The medical service plan makes professional fee amounts available to NU President D.B. Varner, medical center Acting Chancellor Harry McFayden and Dr. Perry Rigby, dean of the College of Medicine. Salaries of the faculty members are public information, but the fees faculty members receive for professional services are known only to the doctors and the three administrators.

Blind budgeting
Concerned about "blind budgeting", the Appropriations Committee has requested increased disclosure of the fees for treating referred patients, Utica Sen. Douglas Bereuter said.

"There is only one class of state employees whose salaries are not available for public scrutiny, those at the medical center," said Bereuter, a member of the Appropriations Committee. "I don't think we can separate out a class of state employees and treat them special," he said.

short stuff

The Lincoln Parks and Recreation Dept. is sponsoring a Christmas ski trip to Utah Dec. 29 through Jan. 2. Registration is due Dec. 2. There also will be a ski trip to Steamboat Springs, Colo., Feb. 18 to 21, for persons 18 or older. This trip is \$199 which includes three days lodging, equipment rental, lift tickets, insurance, and transportation. Registration is due Dec. 14. For more information call 475-6734.

Alpha Omicron Pi is sponsoring a candy sale and book raffle Nov. 15 through Dec. 10 at the Nebraska Union North Booth.

Any member of the NU Vet Club who is interested in going on a field trip should contact Kent Rohrig at 464-0288 before Wednesday.

Research Study rooms in Love Library will be assigned Jan. 18 for one semester. Rooms are assigned to faculty members and graduate students working on research projects or doctoral dissertations. Because requests for rooms exceed the 120 spaces available, ordinarily only one renewal after the initial assignment can be allowed. Contact Eugene Johnson, Love Library 206, 472-1628, for information or pick up an application form in Love Library 103.

Interviews for the 1977 Union Program Council (UPC) executives and committee chairmanships will be Dec. 4, in the Nebraska Union. JIPC committee chairmanships include: Art Lending Library, Black Activities, Concerts, Domestic Film, Foreign Film, Human Potentials, Major Attractions, Model United Nations, Performing Arts, Recreation, Record Lending Library, Talks & Topics, Visual Arts and Walpurgisnacht. Application forms will be available Monday in the Union Program Office, Union 150.

The Pre-Physical Therapy Club will meet at 6:30 tonight in the Union.

The UNL Actuarial Club will meet at 7 tonight in Burnett 319.

The UNL Young Democrats will meet at 9 tonight at Horsefeathers.

The Student's International Meditation Society will be giving an introductory lecture on transcendental meditation at 8 tonight in the United Methodist Church, 16th and U streets.

The UNL African Students' Association is sponsoring a lecture by Julien Lafontant on the "Aspects of Negritude" at 7:30 tonight in the Union.

The UNL Go Club will meet at 7:30 tonight in the Union 215A.

The Political Science Dept. is sponsoring a *Conference on Peasantry of Eastern Europe* starting at 2 p.m. Thursday and running through Saturday.

The Lincoln-Lancaster County Genology Society will meet at 7 tonight at the Easterday Center, 62nd and Adams streets.

Phi Upsilon Omicron will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday in the Union.

The Graduate Student Association will meet Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the C. Y. Thompson Library on East Campus.

All graduate and undergraduate women with a 2.7 average pursuing a business career may pledge Phi Chi Theta, the professional business women's fraternity at 4:30 p.m. Thursday in the Union.

John Reeder, University of Wyoming professor, will speak on *The Evolution of a Classification—The Gramineae* at 3:30 p.m. Thursday in Bessey Hall Auditorium.

Bereuter said lack of knowledge of the doctor's income from professional fees makes it difficult for the Appropriations Committee to budget for the medical center.

For past medical center budgets, Bereuter said, the Appropriations Committee has relied on the recommendations of the regents. However, Bereuter said he is unconvinced that all of the regents are aware of exactly how much money goes to medical center faculty members.

Bereuter and the members of the Appropriations Committee want full disclosure of the professional fees to anyone requesting the information. He said he can understand why many faculty members do not want to have their salaries made public, "but that's one infringement on their privacy that's justified."

"It's the regent's job (to get more disclosure)," Bereuter said, explaining the regents should make this move without legislative action.

Plan inadequate
The Appropriations Committee voted 6-1 that the medical service plan currently in use at the medical center is inadequate for budgeting purposes.

The medical service plan has been in effect four or five years, according to Dr. Prentice Dettman, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Nebraska Clinician's Group.

Most medical schools have evolved a medical service plan to better fulfill their purposes without remaining entirely dependent on federal or state subsidies, Dettman said.

Included within the medical service plan is a billing system that channels all patients' payments. All bills are divided up to pay for the various services the patient receives and passed on to the medical department rendering the service.

Professional care bills are handled by the Professional Fees Office, a service group that does the billing for medical center physicians treating patients, Dettman said. Patients are classified as "referred" or "non-referred", and billed accordingly.

Non-referred patients are those who do not request a particular doctor when they visit the medical center, Dettman said. The professional service money from non-referred patients bills is recirculated into state accounts, as the medical center is a state school. Thirty per cent of the bill is sent to the dean of the College of Medicine and 70 per cent is sent to the medical department serving the patient.

Every medical center doctor is required to submit a report of his income to an accounting group hired by the Professional Fees Office, according to Dettman. Following "elaborate auditing," the accountants present a report on professional fees of faculty members to the NU president, the medical center chancellor and the dean of the College of Medicine, Dettman said.

A new amendment to the medical service plan proposes that the results of this report also be made available to the Executive Committee of the regents, Dettman said. The amendment is presented by a committee consisting of Rigby, three regents and three members of the medical center clinician's group.

It is this amendment the Appropriations Committee finds inadequate for its budgeting purposes.

Bereuter said an amendment to the medical service plan, whatever it may turn out to be, could not pass the Legislature in time for the 1977-78 budgeting.

"We will be budgeting blindly in that area for at least this year," Bereuter said.

A report compiled by the legislative fiscal staff compares the professional fee plans of NU with those of five other state universities with medical centers.

Of the schools able to provide information, Nebraska is the most limited in accountability for income from professional fees.

Audit information for the professional fees is the most secretive in Nebraska, as compared with audits at Iowa, Kansas and Illinois Universities, which are also subject to regular university audit.

ASUN agenda

The ASUN Senate will meet today at 6:30 p.m. in Nebraska Union Conference Room. The agenda includes:

Roll Call.

Approval of Minutes.

I. Executive reports.

- A. Joe Stavas.
- B. Tony Williams.
- C. Bill Mueller
- D. Annette Sorensen.

II. Open forum.

- A. Ken Kofold—Academic Planning Committee.
- B. Dave Pederson—Center for Educational Change.

III. Old business.

- A. Appointments.
- B. Academic Policy.

IV. New business.

A. Resolution No. 34—standing committee chairman reports.

B. Resolution No. 35—committee interviews.

C. Resolution No. 36—removal system for senators.

D. Resolution No. 37—ASUN meeting structure.

E. Resolution No. 38—Union user fee/regents.

V. Announcements.

A. Constitutions in office.

1. Junior Varsity Yell Squad.

2. The Organization of Iranian Students at UNL.

B. General.

daily nebraskan

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