

# Daily Nebraskan

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## Kerrey announces new plan for state mental health care

By Judi Nygren

Gov. Bob Kerrey announced Wednesday morning a statewide mental health-care plan and called for the state to take the lead in shaping Nebraska's mental health system.

Also speaking at Kerrey's weekly press conference was Ronald Jensen, director of Nebraska Department of Public Institutions, who said the plan focuses on treating the chronically mentally ill.

The plan recommends that the state's three regional centers serve only the chronically ill, while the private sector would serve short-term patients.

Jensen said the plan probably will not greatly increase the regional centers' current number of patients, which is 800.

Kerrey said that for the first time the state has established a mental health program defining the goals for care in both private and public sectors.

"We are saying throughout the plan that we have an obligation to attempt to provide care for the most difficult folks . . . which is essentially the chronic care facilities," he said.

Jensen said the private sector does a good job treating mental patients, but lacks the money to treat long-term patients who cannot make it in the community.

The Department of Public Institutions conducted a three-year study on Nebraska's mental health system. The department's report showed that more than 150,000 residents need mental health services. Many of these people are under the care of family doctors or other health care professionals, but more than 32,000 are expected to need state services.

State mental health services currently serve about 28,000 people.

Kerrey also discussed the state's budget. On his recent tour of Nebraska, Kerrey said, he proposed expenditures of about \$848 million. Of that amount he said, \$25 million would be used for educational improvements.

Kerrey said many of the people he talked to on the tour recognized the need to upgrade teachers' salaries and administration systems at Nebraska's schools. But people want to avoid substantial tax increases to accomplish the goal, he said.

In an attempt to find other means to improve the state's schools, Kerrey said he will ask people to put pressure on local school boards because they are responsible for hiring and firing the principal or superintendent; the state is not.

"They must keep the pressure on at that point to ensure that those increased salaries are paid to teachers," Kerrey said.

Kerrey also announced a farm bill that may have an impact on people who lease farm land. The legislative bill, which was introduced Tuesday by 11 cosponsors, would give tax credit to lease holders based on their land's value, Kerrey said.

Kerrey also discussed LB56, which proposes to change the legal drinking age from 20 to 21. If the bill advances to the governor's desk, Kerrey said, he will sign it.

Nebraskans expect the bill to have miraculous effects, Kerrey said, but people need to realize that teen-age drinking and alcohol-related deaths will not change until "grown-ups show and teach them (children) to use alcohol responsibly."



Dave Trouba/Daily Nebraskan

Gov. Bob Kerrey

260 computers available for student use

## Control Data donates computer terminals

By Jonathon Taylor

Eight to 16 computer terminals may be placed in the Nebraska Union by the end of the semester. The topic was discussed at the Nebraska Union Board's first meeting of the spring semester on Tuesday.

The computers, part of the special donation to UNL from Control Data Corporation, would be placed in what is now the women's lounge on the first floor.

Don Nelson, professor of electrical engineering and computer science, explained to the board that UNL will receive 260 computer terminals from CDC. One hundred terminals will be placed at general usage locations throughout the campus, such as the unions and dormitories. Another 100 will be set

aside for faculty and graduate student use and 60 PLATO terminals, designed to specialize in computer-aided instruction, have yet to be assigned.

Nelson said all 260 terminals will be connected to a main computer in the basement of the Nebraska Engineering Complex.

Daryl Swanson, union director, said the terminals would undergo an experimental period at first, in which they would be accessible only during the union building hours. The terminals would later be used 24 hours a day, if students show enough interest, Swanson said. Swanson said the lounge is the only place the terminals could be located in the union and still have 24-hour accessibility "without major modification," he said.

The plan would remove the popular lounge, which

Swanson said could cause some problems. The board will hear any suggestions or objections to the plan at its next meeting on Jan. 31.

The board also announced that the eligibility of five members had concluded. Sid Pinney, president, Pat Meister, vice president, Connie Kay Eberspacher, secretary, Susan Hansen, planning committee chairperson, and Tracy Quevedo, food service committee chairperson, will be replaced by new members Feb. 4. ASUN started interviewing board applicants Wednesday.

The board will present its budget to the Committee on Fees Allocation on Feb. 2. With Gov. Bob Kerrey's suggested 8 percent raise for state employees, the board's annual student fee request would be \$20.62 per semester, an increase of \$2.90.

## ASUN opposes hike in drinking age

By Milli King

The ASUN Senate passed a bill, Wednesday night advising the Government Liaison Committee to oppose LB56, which would raise the drinking age to 21.

The senate voted 16-7, with six abstentions. The Legislature will consider a number of issues this session that are of general concern to the student body, according to Ruth Boham, GLC chairperson.

Andy Carothers, Arts and Sciences senator, who submitted the bill, told senators he believes there is a problem with drunk drivers, but raising the drinking age to 21 isn't the answer.

Minors will drive to surrounding states where the legal drinking age is lower, he said.

Carothers said that tougher drunken driving penalties are needed to solve the problem.

President Matt Wallace also voice concerns he had about raising the drinking age.

A significant portion of 19 and 20 year-olds can purchase alcohol in neighboring states, he said.

"If drunken driving is the major issue, this isn't solving the problem," Wallace said.

Wallace and Boham agreed that the bill would not result in reduced alcohol consumption, nor would it decrease drunken driving.

Wallace and Boham said they believed the drinking age has fluctuated greatly in the last fifteen years and statistics have supported neither raising or lowering the drinking age.

Both said that until the surrounding states have a comparable age, it will not be feasible to make a change and will probably not affect the drinking habits of 19 or 20 year-old citizens.

The bill sparked some opposition by Dolores Kirkland-Simpson, assistant to the dean of students.

Raising the drinking age will create some problems, but drinking-related problems in residence halls, including fighting and vandalism, create an uncomfortable atmosphere, Simpson said.

"Drinking is a problem on this campus," she said. Simpson said that people's lives have been snuffed out due to alcohol.

"We must look past this bill at the major issue," she said.

Reg Kuhn, Law College senator, said the senate must look at ways to help solve the alcohol problem and not simply vote on the bill.

Thursday

### Inside

- Students are not using all the scholarships and financial aids available at UNL . . . Page 5
- The UNL Athletic Department institutes a new plan to help football players graduate before they start professional careers . . . Page 6
- Hot tubs are fast becoming a hot topic in Lincoln . . . Page 9

### Index

- Arts and Entertainment . . . 8
- Classified . . . 10
- Crossword . . . 11
- Editorial . . . 4
- Off The Wire . . . 2
- Sports . . . 6