

24-hour Health Center care one of UNL's best-kept secrets

By David Holloway
Senior Reporter

The night medical services at the University Health Center are probably the best kept secret at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said Dr. Milton Fowler, night doctor at the center.

"It's kind of comforting for a student to know that there is a 24-hour hospital service for them if needed," Fowler said. "We get freak accidents in here all the time."

Fowler said he has treated all types of cases during his night shifts, including one student who spilled bleach in his eye and one who got a fish bone caught in his throat. He said the most common cases are students being careless with alcohol.

'I love what I'm doing. It just takes a while to get use to the lack of sleep.'

--Fowler

"On an easy night, I can see anywhere from five to six patients a night," Fowler said. "On a busy night, I've seen 15 to 20 students."

Fowler, who is a University of Nebraska Medical Center pediatrician resident, has been a night doctor at the center for 1 1/2 years. He said that before he can become a board-certified pediatrician doctor by the State of Nebraska, he must complete three years of residency practice.

"I'm moonlighting at the center for the extra money," Fowler said. "It's just an option. During the day I work in the neo-nato intensive care unit at the medical center in Omaha as a resident."

Fowler is one of 10 resident doctors from UNMC that rotate with 10 Lincoln family practice resident doctors at the health center. The doctors

each spend at least one night per month at the center working from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

"Every month I'm doing something different," Fowler said. "The one thing doctors like to get is experience. Working here gives me a lot of independence in the decision-making process."

Fowler said he is used to working 17-to-20 hour days.

"Working at the center gives me a chance to catch up on what I'm doing," Fowler said. "I love what I'm doing. It just takes a while to get use to the lack of sleep."

With two children of his own, Dr. Tyler Martin, he works as a night doctor because it's fun and he needs the extra money.

Martin plans to finish his third year residency at UNMC this year.

"We get a lot of cases in at night that could wait for the day doctor, especially around dead week," he said.

"Freshmen are usually the biggest customers coming in with headaches or sore throats. I usually talk to them and give them a little self confidence and they walk away feeling like I've done something great for them. All they need is someone to talk to."

There are two bad things about being a night doctor on a weekend, Martin said . . . football games and nice weather.

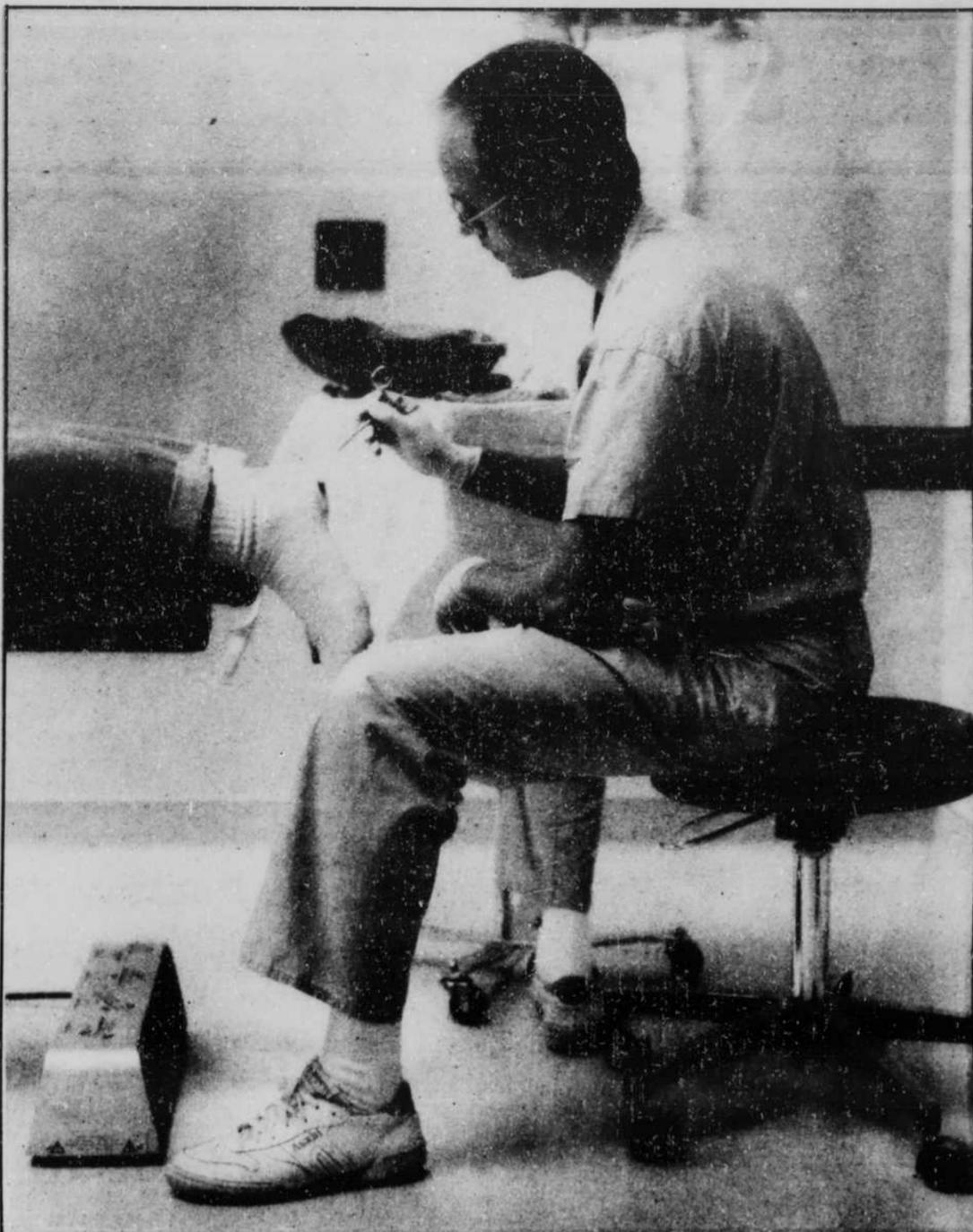
Fowler said he treats many cases dealing with alcohol during those times.

Dr. Scott Ehresman, a Lincoln family practice resident, said the only thing he doesn't like about being a night doctor is not being able to follow up with the patients.

Ehresman said he deals primarily with three types of problems: Sports injuries, infections and stress cases.

"I like dealing with kids at the college age," Ehresman said. "I learn something new every time I come here."

On duty with the doctors at all times are a nurse and an orderly. Ehresman said they play the biggest role at the center.



Dr. Scott Ehresman removes pencil lead from the heel of Sharon O'Neil, a senior history major from Omaha.

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