

Task force suggestions offered

By Michelle Starr
Staff writer

As an examination of medical care in the state's correctional facilities continues, questions persisted for task force members Friday.

Elkhorn Sen. Dwite Pedersen, who has worked with troubled boys for more than 35 years, offered suggestions to task force members on what he thought they should be looking for.

The five-member, governor-appointed task force that was announced Dec. 20, 1999, came into existence because Dr. Fraaisal Ahmed, an employee of the Department of Correctional Services, spoke out against the level of medical care given to inmates.

Ahmed voiced his concerns to the state ombudsman, Marshal Lux, which led to a 14-month investigation into the matter by the ombudsman's office, said James Davis, assistant state ombudsman.

An extensive report was released by the ombudsman's office Nov. 23, 1999. Included in the report was testimony from correctional facility staff and inmates indicating a lack of care.

Pedersen, also a certified substance abuse counselor, has visited routinely the correctional facilities and inmates residing there since he became a state senator in 1993, he said.

"Obviously there is a problem," Pedersen said.

From his experiences with the inmates and the concerns they have expressed to him, some inmates' med-

ical needs have been neglected, he said.

For example, in submitted testimony to the task force on Feb. 11, 2000, Pedersen said he had heard concerns regarding inmates' not receiving cold medicine or local anesthetic for surgery, and medical staff's refusal to treat patients because they would be released soon.

On Wednesday a woman at the work-release center e-mailed Pedersen and said she had blood in her urine but was not allowed to see her own physician when she had the right to do so, Pedersen said.

Pedersen said he was not a doctor and could not make conclusions himself, but asked the task force—in which four of five members have medical expertise—to take a good look at the care, without intervention from the corrections system.

George Green, legal counsel for Correctional Services, agreed with Pedersen that the task force should take a closer look.

"It would be refreshing to get an objective review of these allegations," Green said.

But Pedersen wanted the task force to look into inmates' claims.

He cited specifically the medical care for prisoners with diabetes, complaints of maltreatment from prisoners, the method of accreditation for correctional facilities the state uses, how the department categorizes medical response time and the use of excessive restraint for mentally ill patients.

He also said the task force should

look into the figures provided by the department regarding treatment.

"Corrections is very good at giving bad information," Pedersen said.

He also questioned how the department could have a surplus of \$4,000 to \$7,000 in its budget, as was stated at the Feb. 11 task force meeting, when it says it needs more money.

Pedersen defended the Nebraska Correctional Treatment Center and said it was the best facility he has seen in the world.

But programs, like treatment, which he said are preventative, are not used as much as they should be.

"We're not spending money on facilities like this, we're spending money on bricks and mortar," Pedersen said.

Pedersen said the Department of Correctional Services had been on the defensive since the report's release.

"They're like a cat on a tin roof," he said.

The department did not allow Jack Faulkner, assistant director of Correctional Services, the chance to respond to Pedersen's suggestions.

The comments are only suggestions for the task force to examine, Pedersen said. They are not allegations of wrongdoing, but they do need to be examined without the arrogance displayed by members of the department.

Since the task force was created, Department of Correctional Services Director Harold Clarke has maintained that the facilities are more than adequate and suggested on Feb. 11 that the task force should inspect the facilities unannounced.

RHA, ASUN connection role for second vice president

ASUN from page 1

broadcasting major who is running with the A-team party.

Mike Butterfield, a junior civil engineering major who is running with the Empower party, thinks RHA and ASUN should work together to get more accomplished.

"Sometimes there is a real big flow of information about what's going on in ASUN, and then there is a period of time when we (RHA) don't hear anything for awhile," Butterfield said.

"I want to let RHA know every single week what is going on in ASUN."

Amy Ellis, a fourth-year junior human resource and family science major who is running with the Impact party, said she wants to bridge the gap between RHA and ASUN.

"I want to make more people aware of ASUN," Ellis said. "We can do this by working together with RHA in areas such as programming."

Betsey Saunders, a junior political science major who is running with the Duff party, said she would work with RHA and student life groups to help improve the university.

"I plan on attending the meetings of RHA and student life groups," she said.

Another primary issue for some candidates is making senators more available to students and student organizations.

Saunders wants to make herself available for students and organizations that need help, she said.

Ellis wants senators to go into introductory level classes to make freshmen aware of ASUN, she said.

Ellis also wants to reorganize the senate office hours.

"I want to keep in contact with all the student organizations through e-mail, so we are more visible if they need something," she said.

Another issue candidates are concerned with deals with the master plan for the university.

Butterfield wants to make students aware of what's going on with the master plan.

"I want to let students know what's coming up because there is still an opportunity to voice their opinions and make changes if necessary," Butterfield said.

Other goals for the candidates included improving the campus community and improving the academic quality of the university.

Webber said he wants to have organizations come together to plan different programming.

Webber said some events could be "more effective" if they were planned by several organizations.

Saunders opposes the plans to build a new honors residence halls, she said.

"I think we need more regular dorms before we think about building a new honors dorm," Saunders said.

Group examines research morality

By Veronica Daehn
Staff writer

Abortion is not the real concern in the debate over whether fetal tissue should be used for research, a group of experts, professors and students said Friday at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

A group called Theology for Lunch met in the Nebraska Union to discuss the morality and legality of using brain tissue from fetuses, some of them aborted, for research.

It became known in November that the University of Nebraska Medical Center had been using aborted fetal tissue cells to do research on Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease.

The center had been doing so for the last four years.

The research encourages abortion, and a public institution should not promote and fund such an act, anti-abortionists said.

But researchers and experts in the field say the research is warranted because of the gains that could come from it.

Gregg Wright, a pediatrician and administrator at the Center on Children, Families and the Law, said the research is not about abortion.

"This question is not tightly connected to whether abortion is moral or immoral," Wright said. "But it is being used as a way to argue the abortion question. That's too bad."

Using fetal tissue for research will not increase the number of abortions, Wright said.

Robert Bartee, executive assistant to the chancellor at UNMC, agrees.

"It would be illegal for a doctor to sit down with a pregnant woman and tell her the tissue could be used for research," Bartee said. "You cannot say where you want the tissue to go for research. That is totally prohibited in this country."

Most women who come in for a pregnancy test already have their minds made up about what they're going to do if the results show up positive, said Mary Lutz, a doctor at the University Health Center.

Knowing that fetal tissue is used for research does not sway most women, Lutz said.

"I'm seeing the cream of the crop here, too. Not the high school dropouts who get pregnant."

Mary Lutz
doctor, University Health Center

"I'm seeing the cream of the crop here, too," she said. "Not the high school dropouts who get pregnant."

However, selling and buying fetal tissue should be illegal, Wright said.

There should be a law disallowing the use of fetal tissue if it were created specifically for testing purposes, he said.

There is a cause-and-effect relationship that most people have failed to notice, said Richard Boohar, professor of biological sciences.

Sometimes it is acceptable for a good thing to come out of something bad, he said.

For example, Boohar said people who die in car accidents donate organs, and drunken drivers cause some of those accidents. In that case, a person died because of something bad—drunken driving.

But something good also came out of it—a person received a necessary transplant.

"If you truly believe cause and effect is bad, you better not take the transplant," Boohar said. "You'd be supporting drunk driving."

The same is true with fetal tissue research, he said. The abortion is most likely going to happen either way, he said, and rather than throwing the tissue away, it should be used for research.

UNMC is using fetal brain cell tissue that is 10-19 weeks old, Bartee said.

It is still growing at this stage, and researchers are trying to understand what happens to the DNA, he said.

The goal is to find drugs or other ways to help adults suffering from Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis or AIDS-related dementia, he said.

No cells from partial-birth abortions are ever used because they are too late in the developmental process to be useful, Bartee said.

People need to understand that research is essential to scientific study,

Bartee said.

"We know science is going to move whether we want it to or not," he said. "As people of faith, we have to find a way to talk about this so it makes sense, instead of throwing bombs at each other."

Conducting this research is another way to learn more about the world, Wright said.

"As long as it's done properly, (using fetal tissue cells for research) is not morally wrong and should be allowed," Wright said. "But we should plan for a day when there aren't any abortions to use tissue from this way."

student travel. it's here.

counciltravel.com
1-800-2council

SENIORS: Still Need a Course to Graduate?

Contact UNL's College Independent Study Program

472-2175
dcsreg1@unl.edu



KEEP GRADUATION ALIVE

Nebraska
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

The University of Nebraska is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

Nail REVUE

•Manicure •Pedicure
•Acrylic

\$10 off Full Set
or
\$5 off Fill

with coupon
Expires April 1, 2000.

476-8244
1537 S. 17th #2, Lincoln
Sherry Hudson & Julie Nider
Nail Technicians, Pedicurists

Every Monday Night

is

EA SPORTS

Night at



1321 P STREET
475-2999
STARTING ON 2/28/00 FROM
7-9 PM

COME PLAY ALL OF THE
EA SPORTS 2000 TITLES!

\$2.75 PITCHERS OF BUSH LT MON-THU
MON 8-10 PM, TUES. WED. THU. 10 PM - 12 AM