

Gothenburg grad shares benefits of small-town practice

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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John Blecha, a 2006 graduate of Gothenburg High School, is open to the possibility of practicing medicine in Nebraska and Gothenburg but doesn't know yet where life will take him during three years of residency and beyond.

Blecha, who's in his third year of medical school at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and his wife, Heather (Teahon) Blecha, have grown up in Nebraska.

"Returning to the 'good life' has always been a long term goal of ours," he said.

At UNMC, Blecha is doing clerkships, or rotations.

"I try to go into each one with an open mind," he said. "That way, I don't have previous notions about a particular field before I have fully experienced it."

Benefits to practicing medicine in a rural community are varied.

Blecha said small-town physicians do a variety of things including clinic work, minor surgeries, hospitalizations, trauma etc.

In rural Nebraska, he said a doctor has to be proficient at a variety of things to care for patients and the community.

That means staying up to date with technology and evidence-based medicine, Blecha said, so a physician can evaluate a multitude of problems and treat them accordingly.

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Another advantage is the chance to connect to the community and knowing, or getting to know, many people on a personal level.

“I don’t think you get to build those personal relationships in a larger community,” Blecha said.

Because many doctors choose to specialize, they often locate in a larger community with other specialists.

“You have other specialists available so you don’t have to stay as mentally sharp in all areas because you can refer to them,” he said.

As far as what is offered in Gothenburg, Blecha pointed to the newly built doctor’s clinic.

“The facilities are as good as I’ve seen for a hospital of that size,” he said.

Blecha described the city as having a thriving business sector, that allows spouses to find employment as well as a tremendous school system with inspiring teachers.

The school and Gothenburg’s long-term care facilities are also outstanding, he said.

“From a health care stand point, Gothenburg exceeds most other communities of comparable size based on facilities, dedicated physicians and excellent health-care workers,” Blecha said. “And, because of my enthusiasm for golf, having the best public course in the state doesn’t hurt either.”

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