



**CONFERENCES & MEETINGS**

**M&M/GRAND ROUNDS**  
**Thursday, March 10, 2005, 7:30 AM**  
**Clinic Auditorium**

**Thomas C. Keyserling**, M.D., Associate Professor, Department of Medicine  
**James L. Larson**, M.D., Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine  
**M. Andrew Greganti**, M.D., Professor and Vice-Chair, Department of Medicine

**System Problems in the Admission of Patients with Acute Medical Illness**

**FROM DIVISIONS**

- **John Buse**, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Chief, General Medicine and Clinical Epidemiology, Director, Diabetes Care Center, will serve a three-year term as vice president of the American Diabetes Association starting June 2005, president-elect starting in June 2006, president in June 2007, past-president in June 2008.
- The Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology has been named a "Center of Excellence" by the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America. The Center will provide advanced training in the care of inflammatory bowel disease patients to gastroenterologists in the community. Dr. **Kim L. Isaacs**, Associate Professor of Medicine, will be the point person for the program.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Five-Year Review Self-Study Report** about the department can now be reviewed at: [medicine.med.unc.edu/selfstudy](http://medicine.med.unc.edu/selfstudy).
- **Department of Medicine Faculty Research Retreat** is scheduled for Tuesday, May 3, 2005, 5-8pm. Details forthcoming.
- **North Carolina Biotechnology Funding Information Forum**, Monday, March 14, 2-4 p.m., Bioinformatics, 1131. Maria Rapoza, VP/Dir., will talk about the center's funding programs for bioscience and biotechnology research. Program and advance registration: [cfx.research.unc.edu/res\\_classreg/](http://cfx.research.unc.edu/res_classreg/)

**FROM THE CHAIR'S OFFICE**

This week I have the unique opportunity to share with you part of Dr. Roper's vision for how UNC can continue our efforts to be one of the world's leading institutions in the quality of health care. In order to reach the largest audience with this week's note, I am using both the Department of Medicine Newsletter and the UNC Physician's Newsletter, so for those of you who read both, you're not seeing double, it is the same column.

Last Thursday, Dr. Roper gave a presentation at Medicine Grand Rounds speaking on "Improving

Health Care: An Agenda for Quality and Patient Safety." He drew upon his impressive experience as a long time advocate for health care quality improvement to summarize the history of the issue, describe the health care quality initiatives of today and he gave examples of how the UNC Health Care System is part of this developing movement. For me, the history of how this all came about, the role of Medicare, and of Dr. Roper in particular, are fascinating topics and helped me obtain a clearer perspective on approaches that we promote here.

In their work with the HCFA (now CMS) in the 1980s, Dr. Roper and his colleagues were increasingly convinced that analysis of large scale patterns of use and outcomes would be necessary to address growing concerns about cost and variable care throughout the health care system. They decided to publish mortality statistics from Medicare. As some of you may recall, this was highly controversial. Some hospitals argued that their patients were sicker or more complex. In particular, hospitals that cared for the poor worried about the broad distribution of these outcomes data because their patients lacked the resources to obtain follow-up care that is so important to good outcomes. With subsequent iterations, these concerns were addressed, and the measures of outcomes has now become accepted across health care. Soon thereafter the Institute of Medicine (IOM) became involved, holding workshops and producing a series of reports that defined and outlined the issues involved with health care quality, and laid out new "rules" for how health care should be provided. The National Quality Forum followed, and today the health care quality landscape is crowded with advocates, including the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), The Leapfrog Group, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). There have now been two national health care quality reports, one just released last month.

Quality and patient safety are essential to all of us and to our patients, and there are many instances in which UNC is presently leading the way. Some examples include: the IHI "100 Thousand Lives Campaign;" Clinical Performance Improvement Teams; and Unit-level projects using the "IMPACT CARE" data collection tool. For patient safety, the UNC HCS is instituting Computerized Provider Order Entry, "Sentinel event" case review, a pilot of online reporting of "incidents," medical variances, and "near misses," ongoing compliance with National Patient Safety Goals, and identifying patients at high risk for ADEs. Finally, we are submitting to external reporting and benchmarking, including JCAHO "Core Measures," the CMS "voluntary" Hospital Quality Initiative, and the Leapfrog Survey.

I also believe that the coming years will provide opportunities for all of us here to further impact the care of our patients as we take advantage of new technologies and new ideas about how we can improve our systems of care. Finally, I would like to underline a comment that Dr. Roper made, that I think is very important for all of us to consider and think about as we approach quality of care and patient safety. The initiatives he began now more than 20 years ago, and those of most organizations are, appropriately, focused on "systems." We will never reach our goals if we focus our efforts on pointing fingers at individuals. Rather, we need to focus our attention on how we can improve our systems, to make them "fail-safe" to make the most of the intellectual power we have at our disposal.

For those of you who were able to attend his talk, it was informative and inspiring. For those who weren't, I hope the summary here has provided you with an overview. For more information, you can review his slides which are available at the following link:

[http://medicine.med.unc.edu/roper\\_gr.pdf](http://medicine.med.unc.edu/roper_gr.pdf).

Questions or submissions, contact [Rosemary\\_Simpson@med.unc.edu](mailto:Rosemary_Simpson@med.unc.edu)

