



CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

Grand Rounds
Thursday, October 5, 2006, 12:00 Noon
Clinic Auditorium

David Schwartz, MD

Director

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
and National Toxicology Program

Environmental Genomics and Human Health

FROM DIVISIONS

- **Paul Chelminski, MD, MPH**, will give Grand Rounds at The Ohio State University Health Sciences Center on Thursday, Oct. 5th. His lecture is titled "Challenges to Opioid Management of Chronic Pain in the Outpatient Internal Medicine Setting: Medical, Psychiatric, Public Health & Legal Dimensions."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- An informational meeting for the Roadmap K12 application process for 2007-08 Scholars will be held October 10, 2006 in 2001 Kerr Auditorium (School of Pharmacy) from 6 - 7 p.m. Applications are due Nov. 1, 2006. Application materials are available [online](#). For more information, write to kprograms@med.unc.edu.

FROM THE CHAIR'S OFFICE

This Thursday our speaker for Medical Grand Rounds is Dr. David Schwartz, Director of the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and the National Toxicology Program (NTP). I recently heard Dr. Schwartz and Dr. Francis Collins speak about a new program that will be jointly funded by the National Human Genome Project and NIEHS, the Genes and Environment Initiative (GEI). It was one of the most interesting presentations I've heard and I believe Dr. Schwartz's presentation will be of broad interest to clinicians, teachers, residents, and students as well as investigators. What struck me was that, despite all we know as a result of the Human Genome Project, the gap between genes and the diseases we diagnose and treat is staggering. The environment is not limited to what one usually thinks of - climate changes or pollutants in air, water and soil - but really encompasses everything we are exposed to in our daily lives. Based on the genetic tools that have been developed in the past decade, along with the amazing advances in imaging and other diagnostic modalities, I truly believe this next decade will be the most exciting yet in understanding the interfaces between biology, human disease, and therapy. Dr. Schwartz masterfully pulls this together in a way that is equally exciting for clinicians and investigators alike. I know you'll enjoy his presentation.

To give you some additional background, Dr. Schwartz is a physician-scientist who was at Duke as Chief of Pulmonary Medicine prior to being appointed Director of the NIEHS and NTP in 2005. In early 2006, the GEI was awarded \$68 million in federal funding with a mission to work towards a better understanding of how genetics and environmental factors may cause common diseases. The GEI aims to improve genetic variation analysis among patient populations with certain illnesses and to find new ways to measure environmental exposures that interact with genetic variations and lead to diseases. Advances in technology allow researchers unprecedented access to monitoring environmental agents and changes in human biology as well as collecting data on diet, physical activity, and exposure to potential toxins. This information in combination with genetic analysis will lead to a more accurate disease risk assessment for individuals and populations.

GEI efforts will focus on disorders with a major impact on public health - heart disease, diabetes, cancer, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia, osteoporosis, asthma, cataracts, hypertension, Parkinson's disease, autism, and obesity, among others. The GEI benefits greatly from the progress of the Human Genome Project and the International HapMap Project.

Dr. Shwartz will be joined by his Chief-of-Staff, Dr. Ebony Bookman. Dr. Bookman will have copies of the new Strategic Plan for the NIEHS and be available to answer questions regarding the plan. See you there.

Questions or submissions, contact katie_obrien@med.unc.edu.