



CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

Grand Rounds
Thursday, March 1, 2007, 12:00 Noon
Clinic Auditorium

John Buse, MD, PhD
Professor and Chief
Division of Endocrinology

"Type 2 Diabetes: New Trials, Guidelines and Drugs"

FROM DIVISIONS

- Hematology-Oncology - "Provider Investment: A Cost/Benefit Analysis of Caring for the Seriously Ill." Schwartz Center Rounds, Feb. 19, 12:30 a.m., Women's Hospital, Conf. Rm. 3. Activity Director: Frances Collichio, MD. Facilitator: Theresa Raphael-Grimm, PhD.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- "Why Does the Heart Fail: New Insights for Future Therapeutics." Grand Rounds Feb. 22 - Richard A. Walsh, MD, John H. Hord Professor of Medicine and Chairman, Department of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University, Physician-in-Chief, University Hospitals of Cleveland.

FROM THE CHAIR'S OFFICE

From time to time, I thought it would be of interest to you to hear about the important endeavors of our physicians at the national and international level.

Recently, Public Health Regional Surveillance Teams (PHRST 4) physician Heidi Swygard spent four months working on the Senate Subcommittee for Bioterrorism and Public Health Preparedness, chaired by Senator Richard Burr. The subcommittee worked under the Committee for Health, Education, Labor and Pensions of which Senator Burr was a member.

While on the subcommittee, Dr. Swygard worked on a number of projects in public health and preparedness, which included organizing a roundtable discussion led by Senator Burr on the state of Emergency Care in America. The roundtable was based on reports published by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) in June 2006. The reports describe an emergency care system stretched thin on a daily basis. Some of the biggest problems according to the IOM reports include: diverting ambulances carrying critically-ill patients away from the nearest Emergency Department (ED) to one farther away; patients who must lie on stretchers in Emergency Department (ED) hallways for hours while waiting for admission to inpatient hospital beds; fragmented leadership at the Federal level; and a national nursing shortage expected to top one million by 2020. This situation is due in part to ED closures despite increasing populations. The IOM reported that the insured and underinsured make up the majority of ED visits, many for non-emergent matters that could have been handled in the clinic or office setting.

Dr. Swygard provided the senator with regular updates on pandemic, avian and seasonal influenza. In November 2006, the Health Education Labor and Pension Committee held a food safety hearing following the September E.coli outbreak from contaminated spinach. The hearing included testimony from CDC and FDA officials about the investigation and mitigation efforts. A second panel of witnesses presented food safety innovations that included a recently FDA approved product designed to reduce *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination of processed meat.

Dr. Swygard also drafted a review and analysis of the public health workforce shortage, including some legislative options to address the shortage. In 2003, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers published information about the impending public health workforce shortage. The report demonstrated shortages across all occupations in public health, but four in particular were cited - nurses, epidemiologists, environmental health specialists and laboratorians. Broadly, the factors ASTHO cited as contributing to shortages are the impending retirement of baby boomers, the retention of current workers and the recruitment of new workers.

While working for the senator, Dr. Swygard had the opportunity to see the "Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act," introduced by Senator Burr and co-sponsored by Senator Kennedy, pass the Senate and House of Representatives. The bill was signed into law by President Bush before Christmas.

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