

By Kevin Warneke

OUTREACH

A Medical School

FOR EVERYONE

AskCarolynn Key-Suhr a question about genetics and developmental defects of the brain, and she'll likely have the answer.

"Whenever a physician would offer a new diagnosis for my son Ryan's condition, I'd add a new medical book to my collection."

That is until Ryan saw Bruce Buehler, M.D., director of UNMC's Munroe-Meyer Institute and chairman of the department of pediatrics. "Until he saw Dr. Buehler, everyone thought Ryan's condition was genetic."

Although Dr. Buehler correctly diagnosed 6-year-old Ryan with a form of cerebral palsy,

Key-Suhr's quest for information about her son's condition continues. She believes UNMC's upcoming Mini-Medical School program, which will focus on human genetics, is an opportunity for the public to tap into the Medical Center's expertise.

"I believe UNMC is providing a wonderful service through its Mini-Medical School," said Key-Suhr, president and co-owner of Heartland Title Services in Omaha. "Genetics is such a complex topic. People need and want to know."

UNMC offers its free Mini-Medical School program twice each year. Each session focuses on a single topic, with information provided by

UNMC faculty members.

"Part of UNMC's mission is outreach. We strive to provide Nebraskans with the latest in medical and health information and Mini-Medical School was developed as one way to share our knowledge with the public."

said Sandy Goetzinger-Comer, UNMC director of public affairs.

The next Mini-Medical School session will run on four consecutive Wednesday evenings, beginning Sept. 29. Among the speakers for the session titled "The Human Genetic Blueprint" are Dr. Buehler, G. Bradley Schaefer, M.D., associate director of Munroe-Meyer Institute, and Rick Finnell, Ph.D., director of the UNMC Center for Human Molecular Genetics.

Topics will include basic information on genetics, genetic research, complex traits and a discussion about the ethical, legal and social implications of genetics. Continuing education credits are available in nursing for a fee of \$32.

"UNMC has experts who are nationally and internationally known in many areas," Goetzinger-Comer said. "At Mini-Medical School, the public can tap their expertise."

Recent sessions, which are held in the College of Nursing on UNMC's main campus, have focused on cancer, aging and women's health. The fall session will be broadcast to Distance Learning Centers in Kearney, Scottsbluff, Norfolk, Grand Island, Lincoln and North Platte.

Recent sessions have drawn high praise from those who attended.

"I can sleep better at night thanks to your Mini-Medical School," wrote a participant in the spring session, which focused on cancer. "You provide a wonderful service. Thank you."

"The information presented was to the point and easy to understand," another participant wrote. "I was worried that the topic would be over my head, but it seemed directed right at me."

For more information about the September Mini-Medical School and future sessions, call (402) 559-4353 or visit UNMC's web site at www.unmc.edu. d



Ryan enjoys time outdoors with his mother, Carolynn Key-Suhr, and his brother, Ian.

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