

Concept Paper
**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
MINI-MEDICAL SCHOOL**

Faculty

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Target Audience

- Donors to the School of Medicine and other Health Sciences Schools
- Philanthropic leaders
- University Board of Trustees
- University of Pittsburgh alumni
- UPMC patients and families
- Members of the general public, including students

Our goal will be to attract approximately 200-300 people per lecture.

Objectives

- To impart to participants a level of knowledge sufficient to understand the basic terms and concepts used in the biomedical sciences and to read and comprehend a typical news story on medical research
- To convey an understanding of the process of science and the scientific approach (i.e., a willingness to alter one's position in the face of new data)
- To convey the value and necessity for biomedical research (including basic science), the impact of biomedical research on society, and the high level of effort required to achieve these advances
- To teach scientists how to reach out to the public and why it is important to do so
- To help the general public understand what is involved in medical education and how medical education is changing
- To demonstrate the value of specialized medicine in addition to primary care
- To give something back to our special friends and to the community at large

Concept

The University of Pittsburgh Mini-Medical School will premiere in fall 1999 as a series of evening presentations that highlight diseases and disorders of high population prevalence and scientific interest and that draw on the strengths of our particular medical school. Presentations will be approximately one-and-a-half hours in length and will occur in a series of six to eight sessions offered twice a month over the course of a semester; each presentation will be introduced by the dean of the mini-medical school, whose comments will be designed to provide a unifying theme for the entire set of lectures. Each presentation will focus on one disease or family of related diseases and will be divided into several parts to keep the session lively. These segments may include videotapes of patients (interviewed by their physicians with patient consent); diagnosis of the disorder; information on the latest available treatment options and their basis in scientific fact, including their strengths and limitations; and new research horizons. Each session will attempt to demonstrate both the human side of medicine as well as medicine's future promise. Each session will be followed by light refreshments and an opportunity for participants to meet and interact with participating faculty. (At the conclusion of the sessions, we hope to interest the participants in future sessions related to mini-presentations of advances in medical science, e.g., molecular medicine, presented for the lay public.)

The entire "curriculum" for the mini-medical school will be publicized in advance. The program will be offered at no charge; however, participants will be asked to preregister to facilitate planning, site selection, and logistics. (Registration will be handled by UPMC Public Relations, which already has a system in place to handle this.) If feasible, a mini-medical school website will be developed to enable participants to access more information about the presentations either in preparation for each session or following the session. This site will remain available throughout the year.

An effort will also be made to take the mini-medical school "on the road" to present one-day or one-evening versions both to the Pennsylvania Legislature in Harrisburg and to Pennsylvania legislators and staff members (and any others who wish to attend) in Washington, D.C.

Potential Topics

- *Genetics and Health*—Faculty will include a clinician who treats genetic disorders, a basic scientist who is working on genetic therapies, a genetics counselor, and a patient with an inherited disorder.
- *Neurodegenerative Disorders*—This session, again, will include a mix of clinicians and basic scientists, patients, and families. Disorders to be covered would include Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, ALS, and others.
- *The Latest News About Heart Disease*—For this, we could hear from an epidemiologist, noninvasive and invasive cardiologists, and scientists from the McGowan Center. Perhaps a patient wearing an LVAD could be present to talk to the audience about his/her experience. Prevention strategies will also be discussed.
- *Cancer Update*—This session should emphasize the most prevalent cancers, including breast, lung, and prostate. This would be a good time for some information on prevention, including the rising incidence of smoking in teens.
- *Women's Health*—Such a session could cover diseases unique to or most highly prevalent in women, like osteoporosis, rheumatological disorders, and others. It could also address male-female differences in illness patterns, like the phase delay in heart attack incidence in women compared to men. The session could also examine whether women have been included in biomedical research in sufficient numbers and what the relevant research issues are (e.g., biological plausibility of the existence of a sex-related difference).
- *Health Lifestyles*—A session of practical advice on diet, exercise, relaxation, and how to sustain a healthy lifestyle over a lifetime. This session could showcase our behavioral medicine faculty to discuss what is known about the relationship between health and behavior.
- *Managing My Own Health Care*—Participants might enjoy a practical session on selecting physicians, working with insurance companies, seeking educational sources, and understanding their own rights and responsibilities in the managed health care marketplace. It would cover how to find and evaluate medical information from the internet, the popular press, and other sources.
- *When Life Nears Its End*—This session will deal with ethical issues in health care, including discussion of physician-assisted suicide, and will involve bioethicists, members of the pastoral care service, and families.

These are just a few potential topics. Another way to organize the sessions would be a simple “disease du jour” approach, covering the most prevalent disorder per organ system: diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer, dementia, etc.

Public Relations

As a major community outreach activity aimed at a well-educated audience, it will be essential to publicize this program as broadly as possible both internally and externally. The coordinating faculty will work closely with both the UPMC Health System News Bureau and UPMC Health System Public Relations to assure a comprehensive, coordinated public relations effort.

To assure the highest quality presentations, all faculty audiovisuals will be produced by the audiovisual specialists in UPMC Creative Services. In addition, all faculty will be asked to rehearse their presentations, with audiovisuals, in preparation for the real presentation. These practice sessions will be videotaped in order to provide direct feedback and “media training” to the presenters. Because each session is likely to have more than one speaker and a strict time limit, such preparation is viewed as essential.

Evaluation

The mini-medical school will be evaluated using a written questionnaire completed at the end of each session. In addition, a small sample of participants, selected to assure broad age, race, and sex representation, will be asked to participate in a focus group(s) at the end of the program's inaugural year to gain a more in-depth, qualitative understanding of the program and how it can be improved.

Outstanding Issues/Options

Budget—The cost of the University of Pittsburgh Mini-Medical School needs to be budgeted. Funds will be needed for audiovisual services and technicians, refreshments, printing of program announcements and final programs, mailing of program announcements, website development, the legislative presentations (including travel), teleconferencing, etc. The budget is being developed.

- **Teleconferencing**—We may want to offer the mini-medical school to distant UPMC sites via teleconference. This issue needs to be discussed and, if implemented, considered in the budget process.
- **Accreditation**—Some health professionals may want to attend the program and may want continuing education credit for their participation.

PROJECT TIMELINE

- March 30** Finalize proposed curriculum and speakers, including approval by Dr. Levine; finalize proposed budget
- March 15–April 30** Recruit speakers and finalize schedule; finalize invitation list (and prioritization plan)
- May 1–July 15** Plan and implement PR program for mini-medical school, including media plan, internal publicity, and external publicity; finalize logistics of registration. Print and mail Mini-Medical School application form no later than mid-July
- July 30–August 31** Confirm registrations; send registrants directions and parking information; begin preparing audiovisuals for first and subsequent sessions; develop evaluation instrument
- September 1** Do “dress rehearsal” for first session
- September 16** Hold opening session of Mini-Medical School

**BUDGET PROJECTIONS
MINI-MEDICAL SCHOOL**

Slide preparation (assuming 60/slides per session @ \$1/slide x 7 sessions)	\$420
Audiovisual services (@ \$250/session x 7 sessions)	\$1,750
Printing [breakdown not attached]	\$7,000
Mailing	\$3,800
Refreshments (350 attendees @ \$1,000 per session x 7 sessions)	\$7,000
Website development (\$20/hour x 40 hours)	\$800
Parking (\$3 per person x 350 attendees x 7 sessions)	\$7,350
Unanticipated expenses	\$2,000
Total	\$30,120

If we do "Mini-Med on the Road" for legislators in Harrisburg, we will also have to allow for the following expenses:

Airfare (\$415 per round trip x 4 travelers)	\$1,660
Hotel (\$140 per night x 1 night x 4 people)	\$560
Meals and incidentals	\$400
Total	\$2,620