

School to strengthen computational toxicology and bioinformatics expertise with major U.S. EPA award

THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION Agency has awarded our School a \$3.4 million grant to help strengthen our research portfolio in computational toxicology and bioinformatics.

Computational toxicology is a branch of environmental health sciences that applies mathematical and computer models to predict adverse effects of drugs and environmental chemicals and to better understand the ways they may cause harm to human health and the environment. This relatively young discipline offers the possibility that scientists might be able to develop a much better understanding of risks posed by chemicals released into the environment.

The grant, which will be awarded over four years, aids the establishment of The Carolina Center for Computational Toxicology (<http://comptox.unc.edu>). The Center will advance the field of computational toxicology through development of new methods and computational tools, as

well as through interdisciplinary collaborative efforts within UNC and with other environmental health science researchers.

“We are delighted to receive this highly competitive award,” says Dr. Ivan Rusyn, associate professor of environmental sciences and engineering at the School, associate director of the Curriculum in Toxicology at the UNC School of Medicine, and principal investigator for the project. “The UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health is a world leader in many areas of science that improve the health of people in North Carolina and around the world, and the new Center will strengthen our capacity for understanding and predicting the inter-individual differences in risk from environmental exposures.”

For a list of other key UNC investigators in the center and more information related to our School’s work in computational toxicology and bioinformatics, visit www.sph.unc.edu/news/epa.html. ■