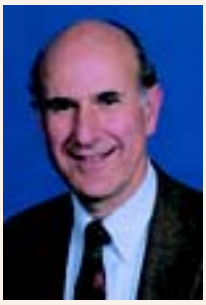
Message from the Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs



This issue of *Medicine at Michigan* illustrates the broad sweep of our responsibilities in medical student and resident education, in patient-centered care, and in leading-edge research and technology development. These components of our mission have real synergy, as was emphasized in our Strategic Plan for the Health System, completed in April 2000. And all of these missions are emphasized in our fund-raising plans for the next few years.

Galens Smoker quips notwithstanding, admissions, teaching, mentoring, and multifaceted interactions with our medical students are truly a core function — perhaps *the* core function — of the Medical School. We have a wonderful series of cohorts of students, diverse in their interests, and able to take great advantage of this splendid school.

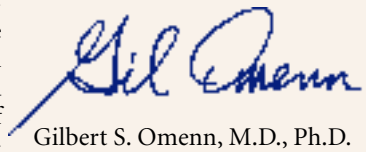
Many students participate in various kinds of research projects. There can be no doubt that the University's huge investment in Life Sciences will strengthen medical student experiences in the laboratory, in clinical settings, and in their appreciation of societal values, ethics and public policy that will be important as they shape their career goals and practice. The same investment will greatly strengthen M.D./Ph.D., post-doc, and faculty and staff opportunities. The rationale for a large investment from Health System/Hospital reserves is our confidence that these investments in Life Sciences research will include clinical translation and will enhance our capabilities and our competitive advantage in care of patients.

Ceremonies on April 11 marked the official kick-off for the Life Sciences Institute, a complex of buildings on Palmer Drive in full view from the Medical Campus, with outstanding co-directors Jack Dixon, currently chair of Biological Chemistry, and Scott Emr, professor of cellular and molecular medicine at the University of California-San Diego, who will be here full-time in mid-2002. The Life Sciences Institute is part of a larger U-M Life Sciences Initiative, which will include a spectacular biological sciences research building on the block bounded by Huron, Glen, Ann, and Zina Pitcher, and a biomedical engineering building on North Campus just across from the Ann Arbor Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Then there is a third orbit, called the state of Michigan Life Sciences Corridor, stretching from Detroit to Grand Rapids, involving universities and established and new companies in the broad area of the life sciences. Funding for projects and for core technology facilities has been launched with grants of nearly $100 million, representing the first two $50 million annual appropriations from the Tobacco Settlement Fund, which is expected to continue for 20 years. The state's aims are to strengthen the underlying research and development and to diversify the Michigan economy through life sciences. The core technology platforms in genomics, proteomics, structural biology, animal models, and bioinformatics are highly interrelated.

Cooperation across the Health System and the rest of the University is a hallmark of the U-M and a growing commitment as we aim to be major players in the new world of research facilitated by the sequencing of the human genome and the genomes of many other organisms. The "post-genomic era" will require linkages between information about genetic variation and information about nutrition and metabolism, chemical-physical-microbial environmental exposures, pharmaceutical and nutraceutical use, smoking and other health-related behaviors, medical history, and health status. In new laws and in our data-handling efforts to protect the confidentiality of genetic information — and all other personal medical information — we must assure the feasibility of such linkages and avoid technical fixes which render such information uninterpretable for medical and public health purposes.

Finally, I want to applaud the multifaceted U-M Center of Excellence in Women's Health. Led by Tim Johnson, chair of Ob/Gyn, and Juliet Rogers, the Center has already attracted national attention and has engaged women and healthcare professionals across the University and in many southeast Michigan communities to advance clinical services and self-care, elicit interest in participating in clinical trials, and influence the portfolio of medical and social research of special importance to women.

The year 2001 is flying by. The class of 2001 has graduated and is already focused on residencies. The class of 2005 is preparing to matriculate. The School has expanded its NIH-funded research and become more active in technology transfer. Planning for major capital projects is advancing rapidly. And the Hospitals and Health Centers, the Faculty Group Practice, and M-Care are all flourishing, despite the continuing financial pressures from all payers for clinical care. We are proud of the efforts of the entire Health System, and confident about our future.



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