

## Message from the Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs



This issue of *Medicine at Michigan* highlights our outstanding M.D./Ph.D. program for medical students keen about careers in the science of medicine. We are expanding this program, and building a base for clinical translation, as well as laboratory work. The opportunities here at Michigan during the next decade will be tremendous, as the Life Sciences Institute and the Life Sciences Initiative on campus, plus the Life Sciences Research Corridor of the state of Michigan, enable us to greatly enhance our facilities, equipment, faculty, research and technology transfer programs.

We are also making remarkable innovations in the delivery of clinical services, including the role of M-CARE (see page 50). M-CARE is an important element of the University of Michigan Health System. Founded in 1986, M-CARE currently has 180,000 subscriber-members, including more than 50,000 faculty, staff, graduate students, retirees and their dependents at the University of Michigan campuses.

We recruited M-CARE's executive director, Zelda Geyer-Sylvia, from Kaiser Northeast in October 1998; she has more than 15 years' experience in the HMO world. Zelda has done a remarkable job of reshaping her executive team, with colleagues who have local, regional and out-of-state experience. They have markedly improved member satisfaction and physician satisfaction, enhanced relationships with key employer clients (including the U-M) and their provider network, and worked with the U-M Health System's Faculty Group Practice and the Hospitals and Health Centers to assure competitive payment for our clinical services. M-CARE has been an essential component of our development of innovative partnerships directly with Ford Motor Company (Partnership Health) and with General Motors (Activecare).

M-CARE has earned an enviable record of regional and national recognition for quality and leadership. With the guidance of Medical Director Robert

Church, D.O., M-CARE received maximal accreditation for its commercial, Medicaid and Medicare HMO plans from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). M-CARE was commended for excellence in service, quality improvement programs and consumer protection. M-CARE was one of only 38 health plans nationwide — and the only one in Michigan — to have a quality initiative highlighted in the first edition of *Quality Profiles: In Pursuit of Excellence*, published by NCQA with support from Pfizer, Inc.

The Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS) scores used by employers and the media to compare health plans put M-CARE in the top 10 percent nationally for mammography, prenatal care, childhood immunizations and comprehensive diabetes care. Regionally, M-CARE received a five-star (highest) rating from the Greater Detroit Area Health Council in the "Staying Healthy" category.

Moreover, General Motors rated M-CARE quality and price an outstanding value. Thus, GM offered its employees the lowest employee contribution for their monthly health insurance premium if they chose M-CARE — and 2,500 additional GM employees did so in 2000. Each year for several years an increasing percentage of U-M employees have chosen M-CARE.

Financially, the M-CARE team has turned around a series of annual losses and completed calendar year 2000 with a positive margin and a good contribution to reserves. The marketing strategy now focuses primarily on seven counties in southeast Michigan. We anticipate a moderate growth rate, which the current strategic plan shows reaching about 250,000 members after five years.

The leaders and staff of M-CARE are active participants in many initiatives in the Health System and excellent University citizens. I am proud that my family and I and so many U-M colleagues are members of M-CARE.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gilbert S. Omenn, M.D., Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gilbert S. Omenn, M.D., Ph.D.  
U-M Executive Vice President  
for Medical Affairs and CEO,  
U-M Health System