

Message from the Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs



The University of Michigan is pleased to welcome back Robert P. Kelch, M.D., who assumes the role of executive vice president for medical affairs and chief executive officer of the U-M Health System on September 15.

Bob Kelch is all-Michigan, having earned his M.D. at the U-M Medical School, completed his residency in pediatrics here, and spent 22 years on our faculty, including nearly 15 as chair of Pediatrics. In 1994, he departed for the University of Iowa to become dean of the Carver College of Medicine. Most recently, he served as vice president for health affairs at Iowa since that position was established in 2002 by our current president, Mary Sue Coleman. His familiarity with and affection for the University, as well as his successful past working relationship with President Coleman, bode well for his leadership here.

This past year brought us the stress of international disease and conflict, and the Health System responded professionally. Some faculty and staff responded to military needs abroad, while others coordinated the community response to SARS and provided care for an Iraqi girl who had been burned in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Over this past year of economic pressure on all academic health centers, we were able to meet our financial objectives through cost containment, expanded capacity and more efficient delivery of services. Prudent management allowed us to gain Regental approval for new capital projects including the Cardiovascular Center and the Depression Center. Through the efforts of John Greden, M.D., chair of Psychiatry, the latter project is reaching its philanthropic goal for the structure. The leadership of the Cardiovascular Center hopes for the same success with the proposed research building addition to the clinical Cardiovascular Center. Our cost controls were carefully designed to protect the quality of care, and one of the best examples is our success this year in nurse recruitment. Our ambitious goal last fall of 425 RNs was quickly exceeded for a final count of 523 new nurses hired. We also restructured the Michigan Visiting Nurse Corporation to add the visiting nurse staff to the nursing staff of the hospitals. This has made it possible to identify patients for home care much earlier, reducing length of stay and improving patient satisfaction.

Recently our Medical Management Center received word that the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Organizations has certified the disease management programs in diabetes, coronary artery disease, heart failure, asthma, and depression.

This certification in five programs is a significant accomplishment, reflecting our commitment to excellence in providing disease-specific services. Kudos go to the Medical Management Center leadership team and to the physicians, nurses, and administrators who developed these programs. For patients with more than one disorder, management is much more complex, but M-CARE has developed a program for identification of these cases using predictive modeling software. They have been able to coordinate the care of these complex cases, reducing emergency room visits and hospitalization utilizing nurse managers. This program has been recognized nationally and was cited in *Healthplan Magazine* in its May/June issue. Additional national recognition for U-M Hospitals came from *U.S. News and World Report* that again included us in its listing of the top 10 in the country.

With scholarship fund raising among the top goals for the Medical School, Dean Lichter has announced that recent estate gifts totaling more than \$16 million will be available for exceptional students in our institution. The scholarships will provide more options for our current students and help attract a diverse and talented student body.

One of our most successful investments has been the Biological Sciences Scholars Program to identify and recruit the most promising young scientific talent in the country. This past year was the most successful since the program began in 1997 as John Lowe, M.D., chair of the search committee, recruited a class of 10 exceptional scholars.

All challenges, such as the current international conflicts, present opportunity — opportunity to reach out to others, to use the diversity among us constructively, and to model respect and compassion for all. With the endorsement of the U.S. Supreme Court, Michigan's affirmative action policies will continue to demonstrate that true diversity brings out everyone's best efforts. As the University of Michigan Health System, we remain committed to sustaining an environment that recognizes and respects the differences that distinguish us.

Lazar Greenfield, M.D.
Interim Executive Vice President for
Medical Affairs