



Dear Alumni/ae and Friends:



As one of the leaders in ophthalmology and visual science in America, the University of Michigan W.K. Kellogg Eye Center, featured in this issue of *Medicine at Michigan* (page 18), is renowned for providing exceptional vision care to its patients. Kellogg also conducts groundbreaking vision research and, as the Medical School's Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, expertly trains the next

generation of leading ophthalmologists. The fourth-oldest such department in the nation, Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences ranks fifth in research dollars awarded by the National Eye Institute to ophthalmology departments, and its physicians conduct 90,000 patient visits each year. Kellogg currently is one of just a few ocular disease genetic counseling centers in the world, helping patients and their families understand scientific complexities and make informed decisions regarding their sight and its care.

Today, 25 percent of people over the age of 65 are likely to suffer from age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in the elderly, and just since 1996, the number of patients seen at Kellogg with this debilitating disease has increased 67 percent. Cataracts affect half of Americans over age 65. Since 1996, the number of cataract patients at Kellogg has increased 79 percent. And glaucoma afflicts approximately 3 million Americans; glaucoma patients receiving care at Kellogg have increased by nearly 20 percent in the last six years.

And Kellogg's job is about to get tougher.

As the population of older Americans increases, so will Kellogg's work. People over the age of 60 currently comprise 57 percent of patient visits, and eye diseases that affect the older population will become much more common as the number of Michigan residents age 65 or older increases by 52 percent from the year 2000 to 2025.

Kellogg is preparing now for the challenges that lie ahead. An expansion of facilities, made possible through strong philanthropic and institutional support, will enable growth in research and educational programs and in clinical services that will help address not only the increases in age-related eye diseases, but also pediatric, diabetes-related and other eye disorders. The burgeoning data about the human genome and the genetics of eye diseases, advances in vision technology, the new and promising field of pharmacogenetics — which will help identify

effective drugs and their doses according to an individual's genetic makeup — are just a few of the important focuses of Kellogg's work.

Our pride in Kellogg's achievements and international stature is exceeded only by our confidence in its potential to even more greatly influence the future of vision science and care.

There is another preparation for the future featured in this issue. As the business of medicine and health care delivery grows more complex and demands more of today's physicians, the acquisition of degrees in business administration are providing a mix of skills to equip future physicians and create new career opportunities. The M.D./M.B.A program at the University of Michigan (page 40) combines the powerful resources of two top schools in the country to help prepare tomorrow's health care leadership.

In fact, the benefit of degrees in dual disciplines to the professional development and contributions of our graduates is not limited to collaboration with the Business School; students are increasingly broadening their perspectives through graduate degrees in the Schools of Public Health and Pharmacology, and the College of Engineering as well. And for nearly 25 years, the Medical School's Medical Scientist Training Program has provided the opportunity for medical students to also pursue a basic science-oriented Ph.D., combining clinical expertise with laboratory research in a fashion fundamental and critical to building the bench-to-bedside bridge.

As the world evolves beyond the concept of multi-tasking to one more akin to multi-functioning, dual degrees are ever more important professional tools for success and innovation in the expanding field of health care. We are proud of the opportunities available at the University of Michigan for students to learn in expanded and innovative ways, and we will continue to mold medical education at Michigan with a focus on the future and with the unwavering goal of providing the best possible training to students who represent some of the brightest and most dynamic minds in the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Allen S. Lichter'.

Allen S. Lichter (M.D. 1972)
Dean

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