

FROM THE EVPMA

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR MEDICAL AFFAIRS

Photo: Martin Voet



The Replacement Hospital Project was a monumental undertaking to bring facilities and capabilities six decades forward in time and technology, and to position the Health System for a promising future of health care delivery for the 21st century.



In an enterprise as large as the University of Michigan Health System, milestones occur with some regularity. This year, for instance, we are fortunate to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Department of Human Genetics, under the leadership of Sally Camper, Ph.D., and the centennial of the Department of Psychiatry, chaired by John Greden, M.D. Both departments have earned illustrious places in our history and contributed greatly to medicine in the state of Michigan and nationwide.

Fewer in years but no less momentous is the 20th anniversary of University Hospital and the A. Alfred Taubman Health Care Center, the imposing banded-architecture structures that replaced Old Main in 1986. In the 61 years during which Old Main served Michigan, understandings of disease and biomedical science leapt forward, as did the technology behind diagnostics, treatments, research and hospital operations. What was known then as the Replacement Hospital Project or RHP was a monumental undertaking not only to bring the hospital facilities and capabilities six decades forward in time and technology, but also to position the Health System for a promising future of health care delivery for the 21st century.

And what do you know? Here we are in the new century, looking back on the years of planning and construction that created this remarkable hospital and its companion center of clinical facilities named for longtime U-M benefactor Al Taubman who, along with noted U-M cardiologist Herbert Sloan, led the fund-raising campaign that supplemented state and university resources to support the project. Without the leadership and generosity of Taubman and Sloan, the RHP would not have moved forward. Without the institutional leadership of President Harold T. Shapiro, and Interim President Alan Smith before him, as well as their superb team of University officials, the project could not have moved forward. And were it not for the dedication and cooperation of then-Governor William G. Milliken, facilitated in the state legislative branch by Representative Gary M. Owen, the University Hospital which enables us to be a leader in medicine in America today would not have been possible.

Noting a few inevitably leaves out many whose contributions were key. Literally, legions of University and Health System staff and faculty were involved, as were many state officials who gave their time and attention to our plans and had faith in our forecast of state and local benefits from the project. Our gratitude endures, as does the incalculable benefit to millions of patients who have been treated as outpatients in the Taubman clinics and as inpatients in the hospital during the last 20 years. In the truest sense, these are the rewards realized through working together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert P. Kelch'.

Robert P. Kelch (M.D. 1967, Residency 1970)
U-M Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs
CEO, U-M Health System