

Message from the Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs



The faculty, staff, and volunteers of the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital have made this component of the U-M Health System one of the most highly admired and most appreciated children's hospitals in the country. We are proud to highlight the Children's Hospital in this issue. The Congenital Heart Program (Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery), Pediatric Surgery, and Bone Marrow Transplantation are among the most salient clinical programs. A dramatic example of surgery transforming a child's life is a key part of the cover story.

Of course, the children's services include a wide array of outpatient care in our health centers throughout the region and important social services and community partnerships. The Child Life program, first in the country in 1922, is a mainstay of U-M Mott Children's Hospital. It was a key factor in the high ranking in *Child* magazine this past year, reflecting extraordinary dedication by both staff and volunteers. We are committed in our clinical care, educational programs, community outreach, and laboratory, clinical, health services and policy research on children to make a difference in the lives of children here in Michigan and throughout the world. They are our future!

We face discouraging statistics about teen smoking and alcohol use, obesity and physical inactivity in high proportions of youngsters, adverse effects on offspring from maternal smoking and drug use, and continued poverty for a large subset of our children despite a record 11-year run of economic prosperity. On the more favorable side, teen pregnancy rates have declined notably in the past decade or so. And there is greater attention to education and the importance of good health in readiness to learn. New vaccines broaden our capability to prevent serious childhood illnesses. Empowerment of children — for example, in self-management of asthma medication dosing — is helpful clinically and good for children's growth and maturation.

One of the casualties of our mobile society, with families scattered all over the country, is a loss of inter-generational experience for children and grandparents. Housing patterns reinforce the separation of the generations. In our Turner Senior Center and in other aspects of our nationally-acclaimed geriatrics program, we seek to encourage such interactions, knowing that social networking with peers and with children and grandchildren can bring real gains in health status for older adults.

Our traditional good cheer at the autumn start of the academic cycle, and the arrival of another outstanding class of medical students and graduate students, is tempered by our sadness related to the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C. As medical educators, researchers and healers, we do all we can to work toward a better, safer world for all.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gil Omenn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

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