

Great ambitions, transformative work

“Without ambition one starts nothing.

Without hard work, one finishes nothing.”

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*



AMEE OBIJINSKI/UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Dear Pitt Med Readers,

In Pittsburgh, we have great ambitions. Our city has the necessary ingredients to excel in biotech innovations and create the next generation of health care solutions. We believe that such an audacious pursuit can be led by Pitt and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), in collaboration with visionary partners. Our cover story, “Steel Valley to become Bio Valley,” describes the first step in this transformative work. It is a great example of how an enlightened local foundation, top-notch industry collaborator and community partners can join forces with a leading academic medical center to realize a bold vision. It is also a story of the transformation of a city known for providing the steel to build the world in the 20th century now aspiring to create biological products for worldwide utilization.

Transformation on this scale, of course, only happens when we come together. I like to think of our medical school as a catalyst, a force for good that brings together people from our universities, the regional communities and, indeed, experts from across the world to work with us and advance health for all. An example of such catalytic innovation is demonstrated by the work our researchers are doing in collaboration with faculty at Carnegie Mellon University, which has become a great partner institution to Pitt. The latest is a promising new use for spinal cord stimulation technology. In this issue’s “A moving story” (page 24), you can follow a stroke patient’s astonishing recovery from upper extremity paralysis during lab trials of an adapted application of the technology. The method was developed by Pitt’s Marco Capogrosso and Elvira Pirondini with Carnegie Mellon’s Douglas Weber. It’s hard to imagine a more meaningful pursuit.

Transformation is also a work in progress, and it will take hard work to realize the fruits of any ambitious goal. So, we’ll not only do the hard work of innovation and entrepreneurship, but through our innovative new curriculum, make sure that Pitt Med students cultivate the mindset and the skills to become the leaders of the health care of the future. (I encourage you to read “An open conversation” on page 10 to learn more.)

Here at Pitt Med, we are committed to transformation at all levels—education, research, patient care, community service, innovation and entrepreneurship.

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