

“If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

— African Proverb

AIMÉE OBIJINSKI/UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH



Dear Pitt Med Readers,

In this edition, we salute Freddie Fu, the late chair of orthopaedic surgery, who was a giant in sports medicine. Freddie was revered for his skill as a surgeon and for his inexhaustible spirit and enterprise. He was also beloved because he gave of himself readily—to his patients, his students, his colleagues, to anyone he came across. And, to our great fortune, he was extraordinarily devoted to his adopted hometown. Pittsburgh will not be the same without him.

Following Freddie's example, Pitt Med will not only continue to strive to be one of the best academic medical centers in the country, but will be equally devoted to making Pittsburgh better through broad partnerships and community engagement. It has not escaped our notice that though people come from throughout the world to see Pitt specialists, many of our immediate neighbors who reside in disadvantaged neighborhoods have poor health outcomes, struggle to get access to care and lack resources for healthy living. This situation is not unique to our city. Across the country, we can point to communities with some of the worst health outcomes that are in the shadow of great academic medical centers. We are determined to change that in Pittsburgh.

To achieve this goal, we want evidence-based solutions that work and programs that meet people where they are. Who best to get us started finding answers than the people who experience these difficulties? Our first task, then, is to learn how we can partner with them.

Great medicine has always been a team sport, but the team roster urgently needs to include our neighbors and patients, as well as care professionals. This magazine issue is full of stories about how Pitt researchers are building community alliances.

Pitt physicians and scientists are listening and learning from communities in ways that we hope will transform health care as we know it today. They're not just meeting occasionally with advisory boards; they're building partnerships. And these community partners are teaching us how to implement solutions effectively in the boroughs they live in and in the schools their children attend. Some are even helping to shape the scientific questions being asked.

Already, these initial programs are pointing us toward care solutions that work in the real world—that are not just appropriate for resource rich, academic care environments. And, critically, these partnerships are helping us gradually earn the trust of people who've so far been denied many of the promises of modern medicine.

These are some of the ways that we can walk toward a healthier future, together.

Anantha Shekhar, MD, PhD
Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences
John and Gertrude Petersen Dean, School of Medicine