

FROM THE DEAN

Rhythm, as both concept and process, is vital to the functioning and mission of the Medical School. Each year, we matriculate an incredibly talented class of students to learn from those who came before them, and to gain the knowledge and skills to teach and pass on to the students of the future. While we train the physicians and scientists of tomorrow, we honor the past — which helps shape our current students — and the future, which will be formed by what we teach and practice today.

The feature articles in this issue describe other unique sets of rhythms, from our body's circadian rhythms that dictate when we eat, sleep and how we conduct our lives; to sleep, which has a rhythm that we must follow or face potentially serious health consequences. Using the past to inform the present, Team Flu's research on the 1918 flu pandemic investigates the measures that succeeded and failed, in order to shape our responses to the next pandemic.

These rhythms are cyclical. Circadian rhythms reset every morning; for most of us, the next night of sleep is less than 24 hours away; and how the United States government deals with a predicted flu pandemic will be recorded in our history and studied by future generations. U-M faculty and students may be called upon 100 years from now to again evaluate how we battled a pandemic, not only in 1918, but maybe 2008, as well.

Medical students come and go from our institution. As they do, the rhythm of medical education at Michigan is strengthened. There is no better example of this rhythm than the Bates family, featured on pages 36-37 of this issue. The rhythm of the Michigan Difference has flowed through Eric R. Bates (M.D. 1976, Residency 1981) and Katherine E. Bates (M.D. 2005) — two current U-M physicians who hail from a family that boasts an incredible 50 U-M alumni, including eight doctors.

Having completed my residency in 1980 here at the University of Michigan, I am proud to have contributed to the rhythm of U-M medical education. Now as interim dean, I see every day how the rhythm of discovery and knowledge is at the heart of medicine at Michigan. It is our duty to pass this on to the Class of 2007, and each of the classes that follow.

Sincerely,



James O. Woolliscroft, M.D. (Residency 1980)
Interim Dean, U-M Medical School

Photo: Martin Voet

