

FROM THE EVPMA

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR MEDICAL AFFAIRS

Photo: Martin Voet



The work of Team Flu — our masterful historians at the U-M Center for the History of Medicine and their U-M colleagues — is a powerful example of the far-reaching impact of medicine at Michigan. That the federal government turned to Michigan for the task of learning from the past in order to be prepared for the future is both an honor and an acknowledgment of Michigan's leading role in medicine around the world.

We live in a time when emerging, re-emerging and bioterrorist-generated infectious diseases are a threat to all Americans. What would we do if a deadly and widespread pandemic occurred as it did in 1918, when more than 50 million people died worldwide, 650,000 of them Americans?

The new C.S. Mott Children's Hospital and Women's Hospital, expected to open in 2011 and for which excavation recently began, also will stand as a model of pandemic preparedness for the nation. A special 32-bed unit on the top floor of the hospital, to be known as the Regional Infectious Containment Unit, will provide the opportunity for isolation of pandemic/bioterrorism victims, under negative air pressure for isolation care and with secure entry and exit. Moreover, the entire hospital could provide surge capacity in the case of a serious infectious event, becoming a 264-bed isolation hospital with all private rooms and HEPA-filtered air. No such unit or surge-capacity hospital facility exists in Michigan at this time.

The U-M Containment Unit builds upon Michigan's proud heritage of innovation in intensive respiration and isolation care. The very first such unit, the Poliomyelitis Respirator, commonly known as the Iron Lung, was developed and deployed at the U-M Hospital in the 1950s.

Our review of the past is helping us to better plan for possible future needs. The new hospital also can serve as a demonstration site for the next generation of hospital construction. The U-M is prepared to lead pandemic preparedness strategies into the 21st century with its new Mott facility, ensuring and safeguarding the health of the citizens of Michigan — and beyond.

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

