

Maternal and Child Health (10/19/90)

Introduction

With this dedication

of the Maternal and Child Health Care Center
the University of Michigan continues its long tradition
of service to the people of our State.

In particular, the Center will serve our society's most vulnerable members
.....mothers, infants and children.

The United States and our own State of Michigan
still lag behind most of the industrialized world
when it comes to infant mortality.

And poor and minority infants are at twice the risk
of white infants.

No society with claims to be civilized
can allow this loss of human life and potential,
this suffering of the innocent to continue,
at such shaming rates.

We simply must do more to meet the health and other developmental
needs
of children and their families.

Our only true and enduring wealth as a nation
is our wealth of human talent
and potential represented by our children.

Who is to say who among the the lost or thwarted children
might not be another Einstein, or Martin Luther King, or Picasso.

It isn't as though our world isn't crying out
for the talent of such people to enrich and enlighten all realms of our
life.

And yet, our children continue to die unnecessarily, to suffer and to be frustrated

in contributing their unique genius to our collective life.

Every one of us pays for this tragic loss.

By comparison the costs of meeting the needs of children however great in dollar amounts, are small, indeed.

Our University and its Medical Center are here today because earlier generations--eight of them or more--were prepared to sacrifice to build institutions to serve, care for and educate their children.

They felt an obligation to invest in the future.

Today, we live in a time

when the motto too often is "eat dessert first, life is uncertain".

We seem to falter in our commitment to the future... to our children.

But we cannot continue to mortgage our children's future for the sake of immediate consumption and expect to survive as a decent and productive society.

Description of the Center

Now with this Center, the University and its Medical Center are taking a new and important step forward on behalf of children.

The Center will bring the most advanced medical treatment facilities to Michigan's children and this will save and improve countless lives in years to come.

The Center will also provide its services in a warm and caring environment,

Our young patients and their families can be confident they are being cared for by some of the nation's leading medical practitioners.

The facility itself has been planned to better meet the unique needs of children and families. From eight additional family centered birthing rooms, to integration of mental health treatment for children and adolescents, to more intensive care beds, and expanded neonatology service and inclusion of indoor play spaces for well and recovering children, the Center has been designed to be child and family centered.

And it is important to note that the reach of this center will extend far beyond the walls of the facility itself.

UM physicians and other medical staff will continue to travel to more than a dozen field clinics throughout the state to diagnose infants and children and to work with community physicians and others to share the latest clinical advances.

And every year, young patients will be referred to the Center from every county in Michigan.

Nurses, doctors and other staff will be trained here and go on to provide the most advanced care to children across the country and the world.

And research at this Center will lead to improved treatment and care.

Thank You

Today's dedication of this Center is also a milestone in the total renewal of hospital facilities that started with the Replacement Hospital program.

While some more remains to be done, this facility marks a ten year

renewal period that has resulted in a “new” University of Michigan Hospitals.

We have many people to thank for their contribution to this transformation that has made us a leader in regional and national health care.

I would like to particularly acknowledge the role of the members of our Board of Regents who shared and shaped this vision and helped to make it a reality.

I also want to thank Governor Blanchard and the members of the Legislature on both sides of the aisle who have provided the strongest leadership and support....

we would not be here today without their efforts or without the efforts of countless friends and alumni who have been so generous in their support.

The hospital administration and staff have worked long and hard to make this day possible, and I thank them for their hard and selfless work.

I thank these leaders and the people of Michigan who they represent. for making this Center possible.... for making it the best such Center available anywhere.

But I think our acknowledgement today must pale in comparison to the gratitude of generations of children and families who will be cared for here in this Center.

Long after we are gone, thousands of children, their families will be thanking you for giving them children the gift of life, the gift of health and of hope.

Thank you all very much.

