



August 1, 2022

Dear School of Medicine Colleagues,

Today is my first day as Dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and I am truly honored and thrilled to be here. While this is my first 'official' day, I have spent the last two months familiarizing myself with the school's rich history and meeting in-person and remotely with deans, chairs, directors, and other leaders to better understand the priorities and opportunities at the School of Medicine, as well as at UM Baltimore and UM College Park. Even before setting foot on campus, I have been extremely impressed with the impactful work that all of you do every day in serving our community and advancing innovative science. I intend to be a visible and accessible dean, so if you see me in a hallway, please stop and introduce yourself.

The COVID-19 pandemic has opened my eyes to the essential role we play serving our communities and how fortunate we are to work at an academic medical center, where, to put it simply, our work matters. We serve on the front lines confronting a dizzying array of generational challenges, from social injustice and health care inequity to antibiotic resistance, obesity, and substance use disorders, to name just a handful. We are at the nexus in addressing these challenges. The rarefied contributions of our investigators are highlighted by seminal contributions in the historic fight to control HIV, emerging pathogens, and now the cascading variants of SARS-CoV-2. Despite the incredible challenges of the pandemic, you have continued to serve the citizens of Maryland exceedingly well. Thank you.

The pandemic has taught us we are capable of delivering public health services in an expansive way. We were one of the world's leaders in COVID-19 vaccine development, clinical trials and health care innovations. We leveraged new digital and telemedicine health platforms to sustain access to vital care across UMMS—true population health where we reach out through the electronic health care record to diagnose and treat. We created a COVID-19 testing lab that has administered more than 1.5 million tests and delivered outpatient, inpatient, ER, and ICU-level care through multiple waves of changing infectious complications and evolving therapeutics. To top it off, we continued to educate students and graduate them on time!

Our vital public health service has not ended. We face waves of new variants, disinformation assaults on foundational science and tolerance, and the shock waves of post-pandemic disruption of the economy, supply chains, work force and mental health. We will continue to embrace these challenges



as an enlightened community of educators, clinicians and scientists, while committing to confront, inform, comfort, relieve, and cure.

I have been struck by the fact that we are fortunate to live and work in a thriving regional powerhouse of people, politics, diversity, and academic excellence. We rub shoulders with so many leading academic medical centers and government institutions, which presents remarkable opportunities to leverage our collective strengths. We are the major public university school of medicine in the region. It is clear to me that this place is special. As I see it, our fundamental opportunity and value-driven mission is to:

- Care for vulnerable patients and serve our communities across Maryland, with special attention to understanding and mitigating health care inequity, while advancing innovative models of primary and specialty care in a strong partnership with UMMS and UMMC;
- Advance basic and translational biomedical science to address public health challenges. This mission is agnostic to scientific discipline, as we embrace the spectrum of investigation from basic molecular biology to computation and population health;
- Train the next generation of healthcare providers and biomedical scientists, focused on the translation of science to medicine, advancing new models of multi-disciplinary care teams, and leveraging information technology to advance public health.

Above all, our mission is steeped in integrity, inclusivity, and a commitment to addressing challenges with science and compassion.

Here is my plan for the next few months. I'm expanding my listening and learning tour so I can hear from everyone. From the top of the organizational chart to the bottom, your thoughts and ideas matter to me. I aim to visit all departments, institutes, and centers for town hall gatherings, and will be touring with our clinical teams. I love talking about science and medicine, and look forward to you sharing your best innovations in medicine and exciting research developments.

I'll reach out to you again soon about high-level operational priorities and guiding principles. These will serve as the foundation for the launch of a strategic planning process. With faculty engagement and shared governance, I will rely on you to help us set major goals for our missions of health, innovation, learning, and community service. My goal is to work with you to make the School of Medicine elite, without being elitist.

The University of Maryland School of Medicine is an extraordinary place where we can mentor and be mentored, teach and learn, serve as practicing physicians and other healthcare providers, and work in teams that contribute to the central understanding of how nature works. We are granted the privilege to harness discoveries and solve generational challenges in medicine. I'm excited to join you on this journey.

With enthusiasm and commitment,

**Mark T. Gladwin, MD**

*Vice President for Medical Affairs, UM Baltimore*

*John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and  
Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine*