

# Any Given Moment

An Interview with Robert I. Grossman, M.D.,  
Saul J. Farber Dean and Chief Executive Officer, NYU Langone Medical Center

**EDITORS' NOTE** Dr. Robert Grossman assumed his current post in July 2007. Dr. Grossman joined NYU Langone Medical Center in 2001 as the Louis Marx Professor of Radiology, Chairman of the Department of Radiology, and Professor of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Physiology and Neuroscience. He was awarded the Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award by the National Institutes of Health in 1999 for his work on multiple sclerosis. Alongside his award-winning research, Dr. Grossman has been a passionate educator and widely published scholar. He has authored over 300 publications and four books, including *Neuroradiology: The Requisites*, a best-selling textbook that has sold over 45,000 copies. He also served as Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Neuroradiology from 2005 to 2007 and serves on the editorial boards of several scientific journals. Grossman received his M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.



Robert I. Grossman

**ORGANIZATION BRIEF** NYU Langone Medical Center ([www.med.nyu.edu](http://www.med.nyu.edu)) continues to be a leader in patient care, education, and scientific research. One of the world's premier academic medical institutions for almost 170 years, it is internationally renowned for excellence in areas such as cancer, cardiac and vascular surgery, cardiovascular disease, dermatology, infertility, minimally invasive surgery, neurology and neurosurgery, pediatrics, radiology, musculoskeletal services, and urology.

## What makes NYU Langone Medical Center's such a leader in the market?

We have extremely talented and gifted physicians who are enormously patient-centered, which differentiates us from other academic medical centers. The patient-centered mission goes back to our roots, and was inculcated in the DNA of the institution by individuals such as the late Saul Farber. Going back even further, we were founded by a preeminent surgeon and a preeminent physician in the mid-19th century. So there is a long tradition of outstanding patient-centered care, and we're very proud of that going forward.

Additionally, we have luminary academic physicians including recently recruited Chairs who are truly exceptional – national and international leaders in their fields. So from the standpoint of the physicians and their ability to do cutting-edge

patient care and translational research, we're in the upper echelon of academic medical centers.

## How critical is the academic side to the overall medical center?

It's a large focus, because it's a self-fulfilling prophecy. There are many good physicians, but those who want to do cutting-edge work and be involved in translational research are attracted to academic medical centers. That, in turn, attracts the best students, researchers, and young clinicians who want to train at the feet of the masters. Part of the mission of

an academic medical center is to advance the health of the community, but it's also to train the best physicians. People are attracted by the opportunity to receive the finest education and then to use that education to treat patients and do research.

## You have also created the "Any Given Moment" advertising campaign. Why was this important to the center?

It communicates the passion, expertise, and energy that happen all the time here. That advertising campaign is a tiny window on any given moment at NYU. There has been an enormous positive response, because, as opposed to just saying we make the greatest discoveries, we demonstrate that at any given moment we're taking great care of patients and doing the things that are recognized as adding quality to a patient or value to science and translational medicine. That resonates with the public.

## Has the health care reform debate been constructive?

I'm very pessimistic about reform, because instead of being an apolitical process in which people look at the issues and focus on the few things where there is agreement and opportunities to make things better, we have a rancorous debate that is highly politicized, in which each party looks for their own advantages. In that scenario, there is little opportunity to make progress. Any improvement requires consensus building, and it is about incremental, as opposed to radical, change.

## While reform is clearly needed, there is still great care being given. Has that fact been lost in the discussion?

Yes. Seventy-five percent of the people who have health care like their health care. So the vast majority of Americans think their health care, although not perfect, is pretty good, and from my perspective, it's clearly the best care in

the world. But we can improve, and we should try to do everything to make it better.

It is a little frustrating to hear the observational cases that don't speak for the system, because the vast majority of physicians are highly ethical and hardworking and aren't making the excessive amounts claimed. And when somebody talks about technology as the enemy, it indicates they don't understand the importance of technology in providing quality care. It is demoralizing to a lot of individuals who try their best to render quality care and provide value for patients and for the government.

## Are young people today still excited about coming into the medical profession?

Yes. NYU School of Medicine has quite an amazing group of students, and we're very proud of the class. There is a new cohort of young, very passionate individuals coming into medicine, and they will be the future of medicine. What is troublesome to me is the lack of attraction of great young people into science. In science, it's very hard to get an NIH grant. You spend an enormous amount of time, and the rewards are purely non-financial. Americans aren't attracted to basic science as much as they had been in the past.

## And reinvigorating young people's interest in science is the key to new discoveries and research.

Exactly. One of the significant mistakes the government makes is not being more focused on putting additional dollars into the NIH and the National Science Foundation, because those dollars leverage the quality of health care for the future. The innovation derived from that investment is incredible and the government should put additional resources into it.

## You're dealing with a diverse group of patients. How critical is it that your staff also represents that level of diversity?

It's part of our core mission. We believe that we should reflect the community. We're a better institution by being diverse. We can't be a white, male-dominated institution in the 21st century when 50 percent of our entering class of medical students is comprised of talented individuals of all genders and backgrounds. Being diverse creates a much healthier atmosphere. It also is a self-fulfilling prophecy, because people see role models and they understand there are incredible opportunities in the system. So we go out of our way to enable diversity, and we support it throughout the entire institution. It isn't just lip service here. ●