



Caring for the Patient

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



Center for Musculoskeletal Care (left) and Joan H. Tisch Center for Women's Health (above) at NYU Langone Medical Center

EDITORS' NOTE Dr. Robert I. Grossman assumed his current post in July of 2007. He joined NYU Langone Medical Center in 2001 as the Louis Marx Professor of Radiology, Chair of the Department of Radiology, and Professor of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Physiology and Neuroscience. In 2010, he received the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (ISMRM) Gold Medal for his pioneering research in magnetic resonance in medicine and biology. In addition, he was named a Distinguished Graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Bordeaux, France. Grossman has authored over 325 publications and five books, including *Neuroradiology: The Requisites*, a best-selling textbook in neuroradiology with over 50,000 copies sold. He also served as Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Neuroradiology from 2005 to 2007. Grossman received his M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. Along with his award-winning research, he is a passionate educator, training over 100 fellows, many of whom occupy prominent positions worldwide.



Robert I. Grossman

INSTITUTION BRIEF One of the world's premier academic medical institutions for over 172 years, NYU Langone Medical Center (www.med.nyu.edu) continues to be a leader in patient care, education, and scientific research. It is internationally renowned for evidence-based clinical care across an array of specialties, including its five leading clinical areas: cancer, cardiology and cardiac surgery, musculoskeletal, neurology and neurosurgery, and children's services.

What makes NYU Langone so special?

All of the people who work here care deeply about patients, they love the institution, and they're passionate about what they do. This caring translates into amazing performance. On a daily basis, I am inspired by their dedication and tremendous hard work, and I am proud to work alongside them.

Are you content with the investment in the facilities and will there be continual changes?

We're making tremendous changes over the next five to seven years. We will add approximately 2.3 million square feet of space to the enterprise. We're going to be an institution

that has all single-bedded rooms, a children's hospital, a new emergency room, a new science building, a new hospital pavilion, and a wholly renovated Tisch Hospital. All of our patient care facilities will be state-of-the-art and patient focused.

Why is research critical to the culture of the institution?

Institutions that excel in academics attract extremely high caliber individuals, not only to conduct research but also to practice clinically. Over the past three years, NYU Langone has had the highest percent increase in NIH funding of the top 40 institutions in the U.S.

Research is core to our mission because discovery translates into the best advances for patient care. It also attracts the top innovators to our medical center.

How much do you have to put into your service focus to ensure meeting patients' needs?

We place a strong emphasis on the evaluation and implementation of new programs and initiatives to improve the patient's overall experience at the medical center. Everything we do is designed to make our patients feel good about coming to NYU Langone and to provide them with outstanding, high-quality care. Additionally, we have a high degree of accountability throughout the organization, which is the crux of our enterprise. Everyone understands that they play a vital role in making NYU Langone one of the nation's premier academic medical centers, and they take responsibility for all that they do.

Is the current dialogue on health care reform truly addressing the challenges ahead?

Despite the complexities of health care reform, we have to navigate them effectively for our patients. This means creating access for patients, being efficient, and being highly respectful of people who work here as well as those who come here for care.

How will the role of hospitals evolve in the future?

Hospitals will be emphasized less because much of the care that has traditionally been rendered in hospitals can now be performed on an ambulatory basis. For example, a surgery that may have kept a patient in the hospital for a week may now result in him being sent home the same day. We have positioned ourselves for this shift by expanding our ambulatory and physician presence in

Manhattan and the surrounding boroughs. In fact, ambulatory visits now account for almost half of the medical center's annual revenue.

Is there adequate focus today on preventive medicine?

I believe we can do more to educate physicians on the important role they play in educating patients. For example, vaccinations are known to prevent disease, yet there is a lack in responsiveness by the entire health care community to encourage parents to vaccinate their children. This treatment is known to work and saves lives and yet people aren't getting the appropriate types of vaccines. Especially when there is growing evidence that informed patients are more satisfied with their care. The simple, relatively inexpensive practice of educating patients is an effective but underused method of improving physician-patient communication.

Is it difficult to be optimistic when you look at the state of people's health today?

I feel good about where we are today with respect to the technological advances in health care – and most advances have been cost effective.

Forty or fifty years ago, the life expectancy for a male was in his 60s; today, the life expectancy for men is 76, and part of that change has been because of technology.

Technology plus minimally invasive procedures have dramatically changed health care. Superimposed on that has been tremendous innovation.

We haven't, however, had a lot of success against biological problems. Cancer has been difficult, for instance.

Also, for an aging population, the requirements are intense; as people grow older, they need far more health care. Providing that level of care is challenging in terms of resources.

One issue with the aging population is more of a philosophical one, about quality of life and how to improve it. Treatments have to make a person's quality of life better, not costlier.

Are there issues within the hospital that still concern you?

I'm fortunate to have a great team. I'm the cheerleader for the people who do the hard work and make our success possible. It starts with Ken Langone, who is the greatest and most dedicated Chair of any medical center you could ever want.

I don't spend time worrying about the future and what I can't control. This excellent team runs its own race and we try to be the best we can be, and our patients respond to that. ●