

## HEALTH CARE

# Putting Patients First

AMA president says goals for reform should focus on patients.

By Becky Jones

A key player in efforts to reform the nation's health system knows that the legislation approved by Congress this winter isn't perfect. But James Rohack, the president of the American Medical Association, told Rochester's future physicians that the law is the first part of a historic effort that will help improve the system over time.

"The AMA's goal with health system reform was to make the system better for our patients," Rohack, a cardiologist, told a gathering of medical students during an April visit to the Medical Center. "And if you make it better for the patients, it'll be better for physicians.... Churchill said, 'America will get it right—once they've tried everything else.' And that's where we are. Health system reform is just a step. It's



AMA: "Health system reform is just a step. It's not the final step," says Rohack.

not the final step. And we will continue to evolve our health care system."

During his visit, Rohack, a native of East

Rochester, spoke with audiences about reform, the AMA's efforts to represent physicians in the reform process, and the future of health care. He delivered the Department of Emergency Medicine's annual Shapiro Lecture, and he visited a kindergarten class at Rochester's School 23, where his niece is a teacher.

While he acknowledged that the new law is not perfect—failing, for example, to address the way Medicare funding is calculated—he credited the Obama administration with bringing the AMA into the reform process early and in recognizing that including language to limit medical malpractice lawsuits was a key requirement for reform.

He said the AMA has long acknowledged the need to be involved in federal policy discussions. "The principle is clear: We have an obligation to respect the law, but also to seek changes in those laws that are contrary to the best interests of the patient." <sup>®</sup>

To view Rohack's talk with Rochester medical students, visit <http://tinyurl.com/y23nvyz>.

## PRESIDENTIAL SYMPOSIUM

## Celebrating the Power of Innovation

As the president of MIT, Susan Hockfield '73 has a unique vantage point in championing the role that research universities play in sparking innovative ideas, technologies, and economic policies.

During a special spring Presidential Symposium titled "Innovation in the 21st Century," Hockfield emphasized that universities can do four specific things to support innovation: foster a culture of entrepreneurship; disseminate models of innovation ecosystems; accelerate a new wave of innovation by promoting basic research in emerging fields; and be active in discussions of national policy.

"It's going to be important for this nation to run a new cycle of the innovation economy," Hockfield said. And where will the new jobs in that economy come from? "Research universities."

Hockfield, who was named president of MIT in 2004, was one of three panelists who shared their insights about innovation



INNOVATIVE TALK: Panelists (from left) Perez, Chesonis, and Hockfield, along with moderator Sonnenschein, focused on innovation during the Presidential Symposium.

during the symposium, hosted by President Joel Seligman, who began the series in 2005. Joining her were Arunas Chesonis '915 (MBA), '99 (Honorary), a University trustee and chairman and CEO of PAETEC Holding

Corp.; and Antonio Perez '09 (Honorary), the chairman and CEO of Eastman Kodak Co. Trustee Hugo Sonnenschein '61, the president emeritus of the University of Chicago, moderated the discussion.