

# *The New Jersey Medical School*

## *A 50-year retrospect*

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### S U M M A R Y

The New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) was the first medical school in the state of New Jersey. Its creation required the vision and support of many, including a group of leaders at the Jersey City Medical Center, century old Seton Hall University and the Archdiocese of Newark. Chartered in 1954 as Seton Hall College of Medicine, it opened its doors in Jersey City in 1956. It was renamed as the New Jersey College of Medicine (1965-1970), and since 1970 as New Jersey Medical School.

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The New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) may have been for decades one of the best kept secrets both in the state of New Jersey and in the New York metropolitan area! With superb clinical and academic resources, it was, from its inception, a first-class medical school of the Seton Hall College of Medicine (1,2) situated in Jersey City, a port town directly across the Hudson River from Manhattan. But through the vicissitudes of local and state politics, it was purchased by the state after a decade and relocated westward in Newark ten miles from Manhattan. The then perceived need of a growing statewide medical university did not facilitate NJMS receiving its own identity. Another first-class New York City metropolitan area medical school founded one year

later had the opposite experience, with Albert Einstein College of Medicine receiving wide independent recognition. Now NJMS is being appreciated as a superb medical school as it celebrates its 50th anniversary.

The creation of the first medical school in New Jersey in 1954 was a challenging endeavor (1-10). Despite efforts since the late 1700s to begin a medical school in New Jersey, little progress occurred (11, 12). Between 1792 and 1832, three short-lived proprietary medical schools in New York City attempted to create a relationship with New Jersey. One had a limited number of medical degrees issued to its students by a New Jersey college. Fortunately, the New York state legislature interceded to terminate this fanciful fiction. The most serious effort at forming a medical school occurred in 1945, when the Essex College of Medicine was created (5). It folded in 1947 due to its unfavorable evaluation by the AMA Committee on Medical Education, but some of its former students transferred into approved American medical schools and became physicians.

### K E Y W O R D S

**New Jersey Medical School, Jersey City, New Jersey College of Medicine, New Jersey Medical School**

Efforts to organize the then lavishly constructed state-of-the-art 2,500 bed Jersey City Medical Center (Figure 1) into a four year medical school began in 1949, when the National Heart Advisory Council suggested this site for a medical school following the submission to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) of an impressive research and training grant application. In 1952 an attempt was made to obtain funding from the National Heart Institute, leading to a series of visits from eminent scientists and scholars and ultimately in a NIH grant for development of a clinical research institute. J. James Smith, MD, Medical Director of the Jersey City Medical Center, began almost simultaneously with Monsignor John L. McNulty PhD, LLD, President of the Seton Hall University, to consider ideas about forming a medical school. The Chiefs of Medicine (Thomas J. White MD) and Surgery (Earl J. Halligan MD) together with a dynamic Director of Clinical Investigations (Carroll M. Leevy MD) and the Medical Center Director formed a special committee that commenced negotiations for the establishment of a medical school. A state medical and dental school was also proposed for financing by a \$25 million bond issue endorsed by the New Jersey Governor Robert B. Meyner, but voters defeated this 1954 statewide referendum with 565,8778 in favor to 718,020 against. The Seton Hall University moved forward together with the Jersey City Medical Center. On August 6, 1954, Seton Hall College of Medicine and Dentistry was incorporated as a legal entity separate from Seton Hall University, which itself had begun in 1856, becoming the sixth medical school in the New York City metropolitan area. One year later in 1955, with similar optimism, the Albert Einstein College of Medicine was established (13).

The Seton Hall College of Medicine and Dentistry, chartered in 1954, began with its first class of 80 medical students in 1956. Based in Jersey City directly across the Hudson River from Manhattan, it operated under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Newark, led by Archbishop Thomas A. Boland LLD, and was thus the nation's only Catholic non-Jesuit medical school. Harold Jeghers MD – of Peutz-Jeghers syndrome fame – returned to his native Jersey City from the Georgetown University School of Medicine to be the first clinical faculty member as professor and chairman of the department of medicine (14–16). Jeghers recruited a group of independent investigators, rapidly producing a stimulating research and educational milieu. A NIH-supported Research Center for Cardiology and a Multidisciplinary Clinical Research Center provided many advantages for young investigators. In addition, as founding father Carroll M. Leevy MD observed (1), “We had a very cooperative group of patients at the Jersey City Medical Center. Prior to the organization of the medical school, the populace already believed that it was one of the best hospitals in the country. This feeling—coupled with

unusual cleanliness, courtesy, and proper supporting facilities—led to an unusual degree of cooperation.”

Regrettably, financial exigencies including \$7 million of debt, the untimely deaths of the University President Monsignor John L. McNulty PhD, LLD and the first Dean, Charles L. Brown MD, and conflict between municipal authorities and medical school officials proved disruptive (1,2,4). Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, declined to assume responsibility for the Jersey City operation and opposed its state acquisition, viewing it as a financial and philosophical threat (4). A Committee appointed by New Jersey Governor Richard J. Hughes and chaired by George F. Smith, President of Johnson and Johnson Pharmaceutical Company, recommended direct state involvement. The result was the \$4 million state purchase of the medical school on May 3, 1965 (4,10) with Governor Hughes signing into law an act that created the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry. This alteration was guided by the second Dean, James E. McCormack MD, who became College president with George F. Smith becoming chairman of a new Board of Trustees (2).

Matters culminated in January 1966, when efforts to retain the now state-owned medical school in Jersey City failed (2). By edict, the clinical departments were then given 48 hours to relocate, scattering medical students throughout the New York metropolitan area, expediting the need to relocate the medical school. Clinical facilities at the 640-bed Newark City Hospital 10 miles west of Manhattan and 950-bed East Orange Veteran Administration Hospital 3 miles further west were utilized. The latter was facilitated when George F. Smith and Orville Beale, President of Prudential Insurance Company, met at the White House with President Lyndon B. Johnson, who personally directed that the East Orange Veterans Administration Medical Center be at the complete disposal of the medical school. Although the site search committee and faculty strongly favored moving the entire medical school further westward to the attractive suburban 138-acre Dodge estate in Madison, Newark Mayor Hugh Addonizio prevailed with the offer of a 185-acre campus (4,6). This plan called for building permanent facilities for the medical school adjacent to Newark City Hospital (2,7). On July 1, 1968 Newark City Hospital, originating in 1882, was acquired by the state for one dollar and renamed the Harrison S. Martland Hospital Unit of the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry in honor of the noted Newark pathologist Harrison Stanford Martland MD (4). The cost of building the \$200 million medical complex on a downsized 46-acre site next to Martland Hospital was met in the late 1960s by an enormous federal grant of \$173 million combined with state allocations, so that almost its entire funding was accomplished prior to 1968. In 1967, as a result of many factors, including the tear-

ing down of homes in the Central Ward for the medical school site, the magnificent city of Newark burned in riots. In the aftermath, state officials met with Newark community leaders to formulate a remarkable social contract with Newark and its citizens, the Newark Agreements of 1968. An innovative Board of Concerned Citizens was established, with medical school founding father Carroll M. Leevy MD serving as its first President (5). It remains active today under the inspired leadership of Mary E. Mathis-Ford.

In 1970, with Rutgers, the state university, unwilling to assume responsibility for statewide medical education in New Jersey, Governor William Cahill signed legislation creating a new entity on June 16, 1970 called the College of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (CMDNJ) (2,17). Under its rubric was placed the New Jersey College of Medicine renamed the New Jersey Medical School and a tiny two-year medical school in Piscataway stripped from Rutgers University. President Robert R. Cadmus MD of the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry was thus succeeded by Stanley S. Bergen Jr., MD as president (1971–1999) of this new enterprise, which on December 10, 1981 became the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (18). After a dominating 27 years in office, President Bergen was followed by prominent NJMS faculty member Stuart D. Cook MD (1999–2004). Backed by the report of a state commission (19), New Jersey Governor James E. McGreevey made a key part of his public agenda the elimination of UMDNJ with NJMS joining together with Rutgers University Newark (20). His unanticipated resignation from office, effective November 15, 2004, probably doomed his intended realignment of medical education in New Jersey. It may be propitious that the New Jersey Medical School rediscover its past as the medical school of an illustrious university, as former Seton Hall University Chancellor John J. Petillo PhD assumed the Presidency on an interim basis on June 6, 2004 and permanently on November 16, 2004.

The relationship between NJMS and its central administration has been complex (Tables 1–4). Seton Hall University (SHU) had been enthusiastically supportive until the passing in 1959 of both SHU President John L. McNulty PhD, LL.D. and founding dean Charles L. Brown MD. SHU President John J. Dougherty (1960–1965) worked hard with dean James E. McCormack MD (1960–1965) as they oversaw much instability, the latter succeeding the former as President in 1966. President Robert R. Cadmus MD (1966–1971) then led our newly independent state medical and dental schools with aplomb into the New Jersey political entanglements that resulted in the creation of a statewide system in which NJMS was no longer dominant under President Stanley S. Bergen Jr. MD (1971–1998). After vigorous dean Rulon W. Rawson MD (1967–1972) exited, and the abbreviated and sooth-



**Figure 1. Jersey City Medical School/Seaton Hall College of Medicine and Dentistry in 1956, a beautifully constructed state-of-the-art facility (courtesy of UMDNJ Libraries, Special Collections)**

ing tenure of Harold J. Kaminetzky (1973–1974), President Bergen appointed a more malleable Vincent Lanzoni MD, PhD (1975–1987), and pursued an extraordinarily successful statewide vision. The appointment of the venerable Ruy V. Lourenço MD as dean (1989–1999) signaled renewed respect for NJMS, culminating in former acting dean and neurology chair Stuart D. Cook MD as President Bergen's successor (1998–2004) and the arrival of rising star Russell T. Joffe MD, McMaster University Vice President and Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, as new NJMS dean in 2001.

NJMS has experienced a number of historic and philosophic junctures: its inception as a superb institution in 1954, its evacuation from Jersey City to the East Orange Veterans Administration Medical Center complex and Newark City Hospital in Newark in 1966, the Newark Riots and resultant Newark Agreements of 1968, shared administration-faculty governance since 1969 under the NJMS Faculty Organization (Table 3), NJMS moving in 1977 into the new 606,000 square foot Medical Sciences Building in Newark, the opening on January 20, 1979 of the new 520-bed University Hospital, the renewed rise of excellence in research under the decade long tenure of learned dean Ruy V. Lourenço MD (1989–1999), moving forward NJMS' identity by initiating a separate Convocation for graduating medical students and the medical school community in 1991, the switch in 2001 of University Hospital's status so that its chief executive reports to the NJMS dean, and NJMS' current expansion since 2001 under esteemed dean Russell T. Joffe MD. Through each of these there has been the traditional tug in balancing teaching, research

**Table 1. Medical School Names**

1954–1965	Seton Hall College of Medicine
1965–1970	New Jersey College of Medicine
since 1970	New Jersey Medical School

**Table 2. New Jersey Medical School Deans**

1954–1959	Charles L. Brown MD
1960–1965	James E. McCormack MD
1966	Arthur J. Lewis, MD (acting)
1967	Desmond D. Bonnycastle MD, PhD (acting)
1967–1972	Rulon W. Rawson MD
1972–1974	Harold J. Kaminetszky MD
1974–1975	Stanley S. Bergen Jr. MD (acting)
1975–1987	Vincent Lanzoni MD, PhD
1987–1989	Stuart D. Cook MD (acting)
1989–1999	Ruy V. Lourenço MD
1999–2000	Joel A. DeLisa MD (interim)
2001–	present Russell T. Joffe MD

**Table 3. New Jersey Medical School Presidents**

1954–1959	John L. McNulty PhD, LLD
1960–1965	John J. Dougherty STL, SSD
1966	James E. McCormack MD
1966–1971	Robert R. Cadmus MD
1971–1998	Stanley S. Bergen Jr. MD
1998–2004	Stuart D. Cook MD
2004–	present John J. Petillo PhD

**Table 4. New Jersey Medical School Early Faculty Presidents**

1969–1970	Lawrence A. Feldman PhD
1970–1972	Carroll Moton Leevy MD (two terms)
1972–1973	Ernesto D. Salgado MD, PhD
1973–1974	Alfonse A. Cinotti MD
1974–1975	Robert G. Wilson PhD
1975–1976	Allen B. Weisse MD
1976–1977	Sheldon B. Gertner PhD
1977–1978	James A. McA'Nulty MD Patricia N. Farnsworth PhD

and community service, with a number of special programs, including those delineated below, adding to NJMS' luster as it achieves independent recognition for its many accomplishments.

NJMS has expanded markedly in recent times (21). It is ranked in the middle and is rising among American medical schools in NIH funding. For fiscal year 2003, NJMS moved up to 56th among American medical schools from the 69th place it held the previous year, with NIH awards increasing from \$38,237,000 to \$64,922,000 (22). The NJMS campus is in the midst of a \$350 million capital building construction. It hosts a number of eminent resources, including the Ruy V. Lourenço MD Center for Emerging and Re-emerging Pathogens led by University Professor and Medicine Chair Jerrold J. Ellner MD, the National Tuberculosis Center piloted by Professor Lee B. Reichman MD, MPH, the NJMS Cardiovascular Research Institute run by University Professor and Chair of Cell Biology and Molecular Medicine Stephen F. Vatner MD, the Kessler Medical Rehabilitation Research Centers conducted by Professor and Chair Joel A. DeLisa MD, MS, the

François Xavier Bagnoud Center specializing in the care of children, women and families with HIV/AIDS managed by François Xavier Bagnoud Professor of Pediatrics James M. Oleske MD, MPH, and the Sammy Davis Jr. International Liver Center, headed since inception in 1991 by NJMS founding father and Distinguished Professor Carroll M. Leevy MD. The Mutagenesis and Cell Culture Laboratory of the United States Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP), relocating from the AFIP in Washington DC to NJMS, became the Genomic Instability and Mutagenesis Laboratory under the directorship of Professor W. Clark Lambert MD, PhD. NJMS will continue to excel in the next 50 years, recalling its debt of gratitude to its founding fathers and the Archdiocese of Newark as it moves rapidly into the 21st century.

### Acknowledgement

I thank Lois R. Densky-Wolff (Head, Special Collections, University Libraries), Gerald F. Hansen MD, Harold J. Kaminetszky MD and Carroll M. Leevy MD for their assistance.

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