

Dean Wing  
Commencement  
Sunday May 24, 2009  
First Unitarian Church  
Graduation 2009

Welcome, Class of 2009 of the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, and to all your supporters, families, partners, and friends. Let me be one of the first to congratulate you on this last day of Medical School for the incredible amount of work that you have devoted to your future profession and to the grace, humor, and enthusiasm that you have brought to the school.

I'd like to acknowledge and thank the former dean's from Alpert Medical School, Dean Stanley Aronson, Dean David Greer, and Dean Richard Besdine. Their collective leadership has shaped this medical school from its beginning..... **And welcome** to the classes of 1979, 1984 and 1989 who have been celebrating their reunions during this weekend.

In the few minutes that I have to address you, I would like to perform a **SWOT** analysis of the medical profession for you. SWOT stands for **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats** and is a common management tool for analyzing organizations. Let me do it for Medicine.

**First of all, the strengths.** Today you will be joining the best, not the second best, profession in the world. You have the great privilege of doing well your whole life, of caring for the sick, the old, of providing succor to the dying, and hope for the infirm. Patients and their families cannot express enough gratitude. You are privileged to hear the fears and details of their lives, even on the first visit. You never have to worry about why you get up to go to work in the morning. You can participate in science, in biology, and learn the latest in biomedical advances. You join a brotherhood, a sisterhood of physicians worldwide who have the same ideals and the same language. You have choices in life, from practice, to education, to research, to health policy, to caring for the needy in other countries.

**You can become a Dean!**

Our **weaknesses** I believe are related to **changes** in reimbursement, particularly because Medicare was instituted in the 1960s and has not been updated since that time. These changes provided broader coverage for patients and raised

salaries for physicians, both of which are good. The problem is that patients did not have to pay for services. With little accountability, physicians and hospitals mushroomed costs. Care became skewed, such as the huge resources put in to end of life care or specialized care. Primary care, public health, preventive care, care for chronic conditions suffered. Quality measures for our system are not good. We have become trapped by the economic model and the culture that says “**Care cannot be curtailed for anyone under any circumstances**” and that only those with insurance will get the best care. Physicians feel powerless in the face of government, insurance companies, and tort lawyers.

**Going out of order**, future **threats** include the future costs of our medical care system. Current rates of growth in costs are unsustainable. We will not be competitive in the world economy and there is no indication that our measures of health are improving.

The **opportunities** for your generation, however, are **spectacular** and **endless**. We are at one of the most exciting times in biomedical science ever. You will be the first to use the tools of genomics to diagnose and prevent disease at an individual level. The mysteries of cancer, chronic disease and aging will be elucidated and you will provide better care for your patients than has ever been dreamed of. The mysteries of neuroscience are being clarified giving us new ways of treating behavioral/neurological disease. A new emphasis on public health, especially with a worldview, opens wide vistas for practice and research. And finally, health policy is a wonderful opportunity for work and political action that will change the face of medicine. Finally, never forget that you are in the **best profession** in the world, that you will have and will make a difference for good in the world, and that the opportunities for you are limitless.

As most of you know Dr. Kim has been elected to be the next President of Dartmouth College. Dr. Kim was chosen because of his intellect, his enthusiasm, his world view of health and policy. AND because he was a **BROWN Graduate!** He would admit that his experience at Brown was formative. That it taught him that the intellectual life is exciting. And particularly that **everything is possible**. He certainly has shown that to be true.

Jim Yong Kim graduated from Brown University in 1982 *magna cum laude* and earned his MD and PhD from Harvard University. He is trained both as a physician and medical anthropologist, and has 20 years of experience working on improving overall health in developing countries. At the **World Health Organization** (WHO), Kim spent three years overseeing WHO's international

treatment, prevention and care programs for HIV/AIDS, focusing on initiatives for developing countries. Kim recently has been elected the 17th President of Dartmouth College, and will enter this office on July 1.

He is a founding trustee and the former executive director of **Partners in Health**, a nonprofit that supports health programs in Haiti, Peru, Russia, Rwanda, Lesotho and the United States, focused on poor communities. Kim is also an expert in tuberculosis, has also chaired or served on committees on international TB policy.

Among his numerous honors, he was awarded a McArthur “Genius” Fellowship in 2003. In 2004, in recognition of his many accomplishments, he was elected to the prestigious Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. *TIME* magazine named him one of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2006, and *US News & World Report* named him one of America’s 25 best leaders in 2005. At Harvard, Dr. Kim held appointments at both the Harvard School of Public Health and Harvard Medical School.

He is leading an initiative in **global health delivery** designed to discover and share knowledge about how best to launch health programs in poor communities.

Please join me in welcoming our commencement speaker Dr. Jim Young Kim.