

**SCREEN TEST:** Six medical students recently volunteered to do hearing, vision, and blood pressure screenings for preschoolers in area Head Start programs. They used a toy doctor kit to show the kids what they'd be doing.



## Campaign receives record-breaking \$20-million gift

When Dr. Peter Williamson entered Dartmouth College in 1954, the word “research” appeared a total of only 12 times in a 48-page booklet describing Dartmouth Medical School. In the current edition of that booklet, the word “research” is used almost that many times on a single page.

There are lots of other measures of the growth in the Dartmouth research enterprise over those 53 years, but that’s an especially apt one in the context of a recent gift from Williamson and his wife, Susan. Their donation of \$20 million to the DMS-DHMC Transforming Medicine Campaign—the largest gift in the institutions’ history—will go toward a high-priority facilities project that will promote research and teaching.

That project—a new research building—will be named in the donors’ honor. The Peter and Susan Williamson Translational Research Building, part of the C. Everett Koop Medical Science Complex at DHMC—will house scientists, clinicians, students, and others engaged in research in cardiology, the neurosciences, and immunology.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for spring 2008, with occupancy planned for fall 2010.

**Brink:** “I think medicine is really on the brink of some real tremendous changes . . . in molecular genetics and things that are going to allow us to look at disease from whole different aspects,” says Peter Williamson. “You have to have a commando

outfit that can move fast and change directions, and I think you can do it better in a place like [DHMC].”

Williamson, a professor of neurology at DMS, has been a significant part of the Dartmouth research enterprise himself. He is internationally renowned for his work in epilepsy and is the founder and director of DHMC’s Comprehensive Epilepsy Center. Before coming to Dartmouth in 1991, he spent 20 years leading Yale’s epilepsy center.

**Neurology:** A 1958 graduate of Dartmouth College, Williamson earned his M.D. at the University of Southern California and did residencies in internal medicine at Cornell’s New York Hospital and in neurology at Yale. Following three years of active

military duty at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, he joined the epilepsy program at Yale in 1972. Yale’s center had been established in 1967 and was one of the first such centers in the world.

There, Williamson focused on the evaluation for surgery of patients with intractable epilepsy, as well as the medical management of epilepsy. One of his significant successes in the early 1970s was the development of intracranial electrodes, which made it possible to record low-magnitude electrical signals from inside the brain, pinpointing where seizures begin so that surgeons can remove the point of origin. He was one of the first to capture the onset of seizures arising from different areas of the brain by matching EEGs (electroencephalograms, or recordings of the natural elec-

**Williamson says medicine is “on the brink of . . . tremendous changes.”**



**Peter Williamson, chair of the DMS-DHMC Transforming Medicine Campaign, has, with his wife, Susan, made a \$20-million gift—the institutions’ largest ever.**

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trical activity of the brain) with clinical characteristics.

Since coming to Dartmouth, he has built DHMC’s epilepsy center into an internationally recognized program; it has been designated by the National Institutes of Health as one of the nation’s top epilepsy referral centers. In 2002, he received the American Society of Epilepsy’s J. Kiffin Penry Award for Excellence in Epilepsy Care, in recognition of his many contributions to the field.

The Williamsons have long supported Dartmouth College, DMS, and community causes. Susan Williamson is a former board member and volunteer at David’s House, a residence for parents whose children are patients at the Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth. Peter Williamson was a founding member of the DMS Board of Overseers in 1973 and its chair from 1989 to 1991 and has served the institution in many other leadership roles.

**Campaign:** He is also the chair of the Transforming Medicine Campaign, which aims to raise \$250 million for DMS and DHMC by 2009. In 2004, the Williamsons made a \$1-million commitment toward a professorship in honor of Dartmouth’s retired chief of neurology, Dr. Alexander Reeves. Their \$20-million gift brought the Campaign total to \$190 million.

The couple will be pleased if their gift stimulates others to give to the Campaign. “We hope it stokes the philanthropic fires,” says Peter Williamson. And the research and teaching fires, too.

LAURA STEPHENSON CARTER