

# Words from the Chairman



**Dr. Josef E. Fischer**

When I came to the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) four and a half years ago, I had in mind to rebuild the Department of Surgery into an academically-oriented Department. As many of you are aware, such rebuilding involved, first and foremost, staffing the Department with individuals to provide extraordinary patient care. I continue to be dedicated to this effort, which remains the hallmark of both the current (BIDMC) and the previous (University of Cincinnati) Departments of Surgery that I had the privilege to lead. However, an academic Department of Surgery also has another component, which is the pursuit of knowledge that is obtained by bench as well as by clinical research. I set a number of goals for Research in the Department of Surgery when I came to Boston. The first goal was that we would grow our research programs and increase our NIH funding to climb from, I think, number 16 or 17 in the country, to one of the top 5 Surgery Departments in total research support. This goal is difficult to quantify because the rankings are for combined Departments within a University and

not for individual Departments, like the situation we have here at Harvard. Although the ranking of BIDMC in total NIH-funded research is not presently known, what I do know is that we have grown substantially in the past years with the addition of new surgeons and investigators that are involved in basic and clinical research. Another goal I set concerning research was that each Division should have an NIH-funded laboratory, something which we are well on the way to achieving.

So, how are we doing in funding our basic and clinical research programs? I am pleased to say that our research holdings from the NIH have continued to grow each year. Last year we saw almost an 8% increase in NIH funding, which followed on the heels of a 13.4% increase in 2004, and a 22.5% increase in 2003. The total awarded funds for research last year, as you will see from the chart included in the report from Surgical Research that includes both NIH and non-NIH funding, was about \$12.6 million dollars. Since 2001 when I arrived at BIDMC, this represents a 23% increase in total funds awarded to our research programs in Surgery! Having productive and well-funded research laboratories in Surgery is an important part of our residency program too, so that our residents can go into the laboratory and carry-out first-class research with members of the Department of Surgery. Hence, we have gone a long way toward fulfilling our goal of sustained growth in research, both at the departmental and divisional levels, which could only be realized by the hard work and dedication of our research faculty, staff, and fellows over the past four and a half years.

I wish to thank all of the Division Chiefs and members of the Department, faculty and staff alike, for their continued superb efforts in making the Department of Surgery at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center a true academic Department. My thanks are also extended to Drs. Per-Olof Hasselgren and Susan Hagen for putting together this book, and for their continued efforts to build and promote an especially strong academic program in Surgery.

## **Josef E. Fischer, MD**

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Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

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