

# RTW Foundation donates \$8 million to reimagine physician training in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine

*A gift sparks curriculum transformation and new lectureship, and names Entrepreneurship Pathway in honor of alumnus Rod Wong, M'03.*

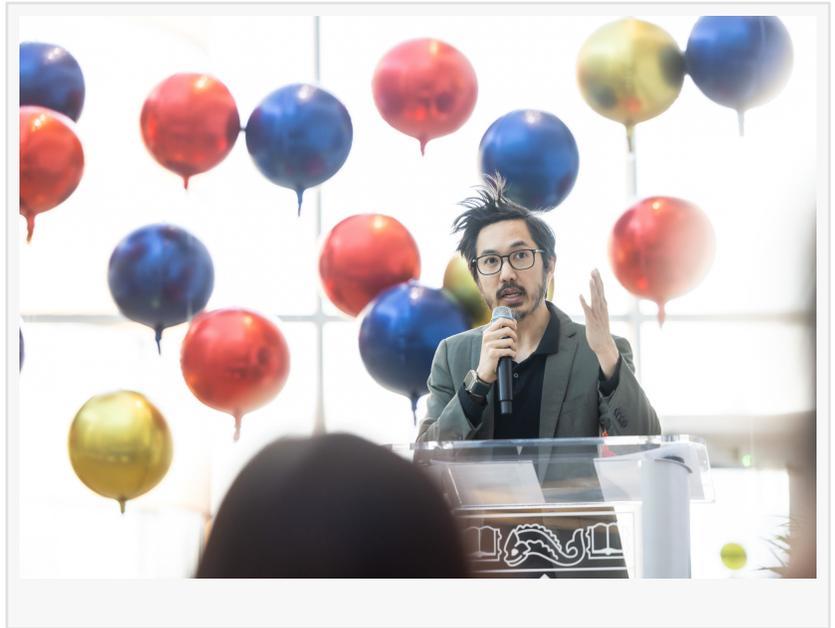
PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, January 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --

A landmark \$8 million gift from the RTW Foundation, led by Penn Medicine Board of Trustees member Rod Wong, M'03, and Marti Speranza Wong, C'98, will launch a bold initiative to reimagine medical education at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. It is the

single largest donation to support curriculum innovation in PSOM history, ensuring that the nation's first medical school will continue to lead in training physicians for generations to come.

The project will bring together faculty, staff, and students to create and implement a new curriculum built for the future of medicine: an era when gene therapies have reshaped the promise of cures for an array of diseases, artificial intelligence is putting new treatments closer at hand than ever, and the rise of remote monitoring and telemedicine are changing the ways in which doctors interact with patients.

The new curriculum will integrate technology, AI, and data in powerful ways, providing greater flexibility and customized learning plans to students through the concept of precision education, a methodology inspired by precision medicine, which personalizes treatments for patients based on genetics, environment, and lifestyle. Emerging tools like ambient listening technology, for instance, will help students develop clinical reasoning skills and work in teams with other types of health care professionals. Customized AR/VR simulations will help students to better understand anatomy, master crucial knowledge to diagnose illness and develop treatment plans, and enhance training for procedural skills such as ultrasounds and suturing. By building a vast ecosystem of data and interwoven AI tools – such as insights drawn from how students use



Penn's electronic medical record (EMR) system during clinical education – each of the school's nearly 800 student doctors will have a more personalized pathway to guide their education.

Together, these elements will support training flexibility and innovation as the field races ahead. Those same qualities have also guided Rod Wong's entrepreneurial success and vision through a professional journey spanning medicine, business, and biotech investment.

"I see interdisciplinary work in motion all across Penn, and it's powerful when students and faculty have the runway to expand their thinking. This gift from the RTW Foundation, powering a leading approach to medical education with an entrepreneurial model will be another groundbreaking way that the Perelman School of Medicine is the setting the standard for the future of medicine," said J. Larry Jameson, MD, PhD, President of the University of Pennsylvania. "Rod and Marti exemplify the very best of Penn—visionary alumni leaders whose commitment to advancing medicine will shape generations to come."

Why Penn, why now

"I believe medical innovation is the key to life being better in the future than it is today" Wong said. "And as science accelerates, to train physicians for the future, so should education. Penn has the courage and the team to pursue this, which is why I am so excited to have the opportunity to support this effort."

Wong and the RTW Foundation have a history of encouraging "out of the box" thinking at the Perelman School of Medicine. In 2013, PSOM created the innovative, student-led PennHealthX with Wong's support – a program which encourages students to explore their interests at the intersection of health care management, entrepreneurship, and technology. Among other activities, the program has funded more than 50 student-run startups in areas ranging from allergen detection in food to top-rated medicine reminder apps to AI caregiving companions.

The new gift will also allow PSOM to host the Roderick Wong, M'03 Endowed Lectureship in business and entrepreneurship twice each year, which will bring leaders in medicine and health care innovation to campus. In addition, it will establish the Roderick Wong Entrepreneurship Pathway, designed to provide mentorship, workshops, and project-based learning to support bold thinking. The model builds on Penn's longstanding tradition of empowering students to incorporate passions and interests that draw on the University's 12 schools.

"I've been at Penn for 30 years, and I'm so proud of the doctors who've trained here, whether they have pursued clinical care, research, entrepreneurship, or other paths. But much has changed in that time, both in the information we must teach and in the ways students can learn best," said Jonathan A. Epstein, MD, Dean of the Perelman School of Medicine and Executive Vice President of the University of Pennsylvania for the Health System. "This generous gift empowers us to experiment with cutting-edge teaching methods and tools to build a curriculum that keeps pace as medicine continues to evolve."

## Setting a new standard for medical education

Historically, medical student education has been structured as a one-size-fits-all approach with lecture and small-group courses covering all the body's systems, labs, and clinical rotations to get real-world patient care experience. The PSOM curriculum reimagination is a new chapter that began with "Curriculum 2000" under the leadership of longtime PSOM Senior Vice Dean for Education Gail Morrison, MD, who introduced training in the late 1990s that emphasized professionalism, patient-centered care, and humanism. Curriculum 2000 also saw the creation of a robust "standardized patient" program using medical actors that continues to be an essential part of PSOM training. The new effort will be led by Lisa M. Bellini, MD, Executive Vice Dean of the Perelman School of Medicine and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs for the University of Pennsylvania Health System, and Jennifer R. Kogan, MD, Vice Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education—both internationally recognized leaders in medical education and faculty development who have built their careers at Penn Medicine.

Conducting research and testing the new approaches will be a key focus, as well. By sharing new tools in an open-source format for other schools to use, the reimaged curriculum has the potential to influence medical education around the world, building on Penn Medicine's partnerships with VinUniversity in Vietnam, where leaders helped establish the country's first private not-for-profit medical school, and the American University in Dubai, where the UAE's premier medical school will open in 2027.

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