

Good afternoon, everyone and welcome to the Chan Soon-Shiong Medical Center at Windber.

I am Richard Sukenik, the hospital CEO. I want to start by saying that it's an honor to be here today—to be at the beginning of this partnership between Chan Soon-Shiong Medical Center at Windber and Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine. We believe this partnership will significantly impact our patients that we serve, the students that are part of the program, and our community and surrounding region for years to come.

Today's signing marks a pivotal moment for the future of healthcare in our region and throughout the Commonwealth.

We are here because we share a vision. A vision of accessible, high-quality, community-centered care. We have a vision of education that goes beyond the classroom—education that is hands-on, mission-driven, and grounded in real-life experience. This shared vision recognizes that the future of healthcare depends not just on technology or infrastructure, but on people.

At CSSMCW, we see firsthand the healthcare challenges faced by rural communities. We see the struggles of patients who have to travel long distances for care, of families navigating limited resources, and of hospitals working hard to fill workforce gaps – particularly physicians. But we also see something else—we see resilience. We see the incredible commitment of our staff, the strength of our patients and our community, and the determination of future physicians who want to make a difference.

Together, we are building something that is both practical and powerful: a pipeline of future physicians who are not only clinically skilled, but also deeply committed to serving where they're needed most.

For Chan Soon-Shiong Medical Center, this partnership is not just an educational collaboration—it's a strategic investment in the future of healthcare. It allows us to expand our teaching mission, foster innovation, and ensure that the values we hold dear—access to care, excellence, and empathy—are passed on to the next generation of care providers.

The benefits of this partnership will extend far beyond hospital walls. This initiative will bring new energy and economic vitality to our region. It will create jobs, support local businesses, and inspire students from our community and the surrounding region to pursue careers in medicine—students who might not have otherwise seen a path forward.

Today's signing is not just a formality. It's a statement. A statement that we are ready to lead, ready to teach, and ready to serve.

To the team at IUP, especially Dr. Miko Rose and for her leadership: thank you for your vision, for your belief in this mission, and for inviting us to be part of it. To our staff at CSSMCW—thank you for welcoming this opportunity with open arms and open minds. And to everyone here today—thank you for your support, it is essential to making this dream a reality.

And now, it is my great pleasure to introduce someone whose leadership has been instrumental in making this vision possible. A champion of public education, community engagement, and bold innovation. Please join me in welcoming the President of Indiana University of Pennsylvania—**Dr. Michael Driscoll**.