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History in the Making: Approval Granted to Establish Herta and Paul Amir School of Medicine

Professor Haim Bitterman, One of Israel's Leading Medical Experts, Appointed as Dean

HAIFA, ISRAEL (February 11, 2025) - The Council for Higher Education in Israel has officially approved the establishment of the **Herta and Paul Amir School of Medicine** at the University of Haifa, set to open in the upcoming academic year 2025-2026.

The decision to establish the new medical school comes in response to the **severe shortage of physicians in Israel**, a crisis that is particularly acute in the north compared to central Israel. One of the school's primary goals is to **strengthen the healthcare system in northern Israel**, not only through academic instruction and hands-on clinical experience at nearby medical facilities, but also by offering scholarships and incentives that will encourage graduates to remain in the region as practicing physicians.

The school's curriculum will **prioritize 21st-century medicine**, encompassing telemedicine, data-driven care, community health, and integrative services. To prepare students for modern medical challenges, we will utilize an advanced simulation center equipped with AI and virtual reality. Furthermore, the school will foster strong collaborations with our internationally recognized researchers in the Faculties of Natural Sciences and Health Sciences, as well as with Clalit Health Services, the largest HMO in northern Israel.

The inaugural cohort will include 64 students, with the program eventually expanding to 100 students per year. This growth will help meet Israel's urgent need for highly trained medical professionals, particularly in underserved areas.

"This is a landmark day for the University of Haifa and a celebration for Israel, especially the North," said University President Professor Gur Alroey. "The war has **magnified the strain on our healthcare system**, particularly in medical and mental health services. Establishing this medical school in Haifa is a crucial step toward meeting national needs, while addressing the unique demands of the region. We are especially honored that Prof. Haim Bitterman agreed to serve as our founding dean. He is a highly respected medical leader with decades of experience in healthcare innovation, patient care, and medical education. His commitment to academic excellence will be instrumental in developing a medical school that will advance medical practice, drive innovation, and shape the future of healthcare in Israel."

The University of Haifa extends its deep gratitude to **Mrs. Herta Amir and the late Paul Amir** for their longstanding commitment to Israel, the northern region, and the advancement of medical education.

Academic Leadership

Professor Haim Bitterman, distinguished physician and researcher, brings extensive experience in medical education, clinical practice, and academic leadership. He previously served as the chairman of medicine at Carmel Hospital in Haifa until 2010 and is a Professor of Medicine (Emeritus) at the Technion. Additionally, he has held leadership roles such as chief medical officer at Clalit Health Services, director of Assuta Ashdod Public Hospital, and, notably, Scientific Director of the Israel National Institute for Health Policy Research. Prof. Bitterman is a retired internal medicine specialist with expertise in advancing medical education, integrating innovative technologies into healthcare training, and fostering multidisciplinary approaches to patient care. His work emphasizes preparing doctors for the challenges of 21st-century medicine, including mastering new technologies, telemedicine, and community-based care.

"As a native of Haifa, I am honored to lead the establishment of the University of Haifa's new medical school," said Professor Bitterman. "Our school will leverage the academic strengths of the University, Carmel Medical Center, Clalit's Haifa and Western Galilee District, and Israel's leading healthcare institutions. It will be a hub for outstanding research, attracting top students who will become Israel's future doctors. The school will also establish a strong foundation for groundbreaking biomedical research, in collaboration with medical institutions across the globe."