People with disabilities now make up over 20% of the American population. Despite this high prevalence, our society provides only marginal support for the overall health and well-being of this demographic.

Involvement in adaptive sports as a young person improves the likelihood of employment as an adult, provides a higher quality of life, and results in better physical and mental health.

Students with disabilities are as likely to say they are planning to attend college as their able-bodied peers. For those who are student-athletes, opportunities to participate in physical activity in college are essential.
Physical fitness is vital for everyone’s health and wellness and participation in sports provides a sense of community. Individuals with mobility impairments have a need for physical fitness just as much as their able-bodied counterparts. However, the lack of adaptive sports, fitness programming and physical accessibility of facilities often limits their ability to participate. Adaptive sports – the use of modified equipment so all can participate – provide an opportunity for everyone, regardless of competition level or (dis)ability, to engage in, benefit from and have access to physical activity.

More than 60,000 children with disabilities in the United States enjoy adaptive sports, yet these opportunities drop drastically as teens enter college. Only a handful of adaptive sports programs exist in an intercollegiate environment, and none are sanctioned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

I am proud to say that U-M is addressing these needs and creating equal access to physical and emotional health and wellness for individuals with physical disabilities. We are creating University of Michigan Adapted Athletics, a top-flight adaptive sports program which will provide several benefits to Michigan Medicine, the University and, most importantly, to those with disabilities.

I hope you enjoy reading about our vision, and how together, we can be the “Leaders and Best” in adaptive sports.

Go Blue!

Oluwaferanmi Okanlami M.D., M.S.
Assistant Professor of Family Medicine (MDisability) and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation; Director - Medical Student Programs: Office for Health Equity and Inclusion; Director - Adaptive Sports: Michigan Center for Human Athletic Medicine and Performance
Michigan Medicine
OUR VISION

University of Michigan Medical School
Department of Family Medicine seeks to lead our state and nation by embracing diversity and providing new opportunities to student-athletes with disabilities.

U-M has renewed a campus-wide commitment to the inclusion of diverse thought, talent, and experience. With our storied history of excellence as a Division 1 school that excels in academics and athletics, our vision is to be a pioneer in the classroom and on the field.

Our vision includes attracting talented student-athletes with disabilities who seek to compete at the highest levels, including the Paralympic Games.

The Department of Family Medicine has established MDisability to create groundbreaking and synergistic opportunities in patient care, research, education, and community engagement throughout Michigan Medicine. U-M will become a destination for patients who would benefit from adaptive sports programs and accessible facilities; sports medicine providers and scientific researchers interested in advancing adaptive sports; and a first-rate training ground for medical students and trainees who will become the next generation of leaders in the field.
OUR PROGRAM TODAY

We have established a multi-disciplinary Adaptive Sports Program with an initial focus on wheelchair basketball and wheelchair tennis, providing disability education and access to physical fitness to student-athletes, learners, patients, and the community.

The goal of the Adaptive Sports Program is to provide access to physical fitness for all people, regardless of competition level or (dis)ability, while our Adaptive Sports Medicine component will provide best in class care for these same athletes, at all levels.

Dr. Okanlami has been partnering with stakeholders across the campus and community, and the program currently holds wheelchair basketball drop in sessions twice a month, wheelchair tennis practice once a week, and formed a Sponsored Student Organization full of interested disabled and non-disabled students, residents, faculty, and staff. This student group has introduced new opportunities such as an off-road wheelchair for adaptive outdoor adventures, and sled hockey.

They have also benefited from a close relationship with Piotr Pasik, (pictured on the right), Director of MSU Adaptive Sports & Recreation Club.
Our program will not only benefit elite student athletes with disabilities, but also provide opportunities to engage in adaptive sports for the entire student body and greater campus community.
**WHO WOULD BENEFIT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Our Community</th>
<th>Medical Professionals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Elite level adaptive student-athletes who wish to receive a world-class education while continuing to compete in collegiate athletics&lt;br&gt;• Any student with a disability who wishes to have access to physical fitness while studying at Michigan, either through intramural or recreational sport, or just accessible fitness training&lt;br&gt;• U-M students who will earn academic credit for working with the program</td>
<td>• Individuals undergoing inpatient rehabilitation participating in adaptive sports as part of their therapy, be it physical or recreational therapy&lt;br&gt;• Any person, regardless of (dis)ability can participate in adaptive sports, supporting the idea of true inclusion&lt;br&gt;• Corporations, foundations, and individuals interested in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion&lt;br&gt;• Local schools wanting to offer adaptive sports and inclusive recreation options into their physical education curriculum</td>
<td>• Learners and clinicians at Michigan Medicine will gain expertise in the care of patients with disabilities and have the opportunity for collaborations with experts in physical/occupational/recreational therapy, orthopedics, rehabilitation, kinesiology, nursing, engineering, public health, primary care sports medicine, social work, architecture etc. to ensure accessibility in all forms&lt;br&gt;• Michigan Medicine will become a destination location for aspiring Paralympic team doctors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUR ATHLETES

Caiden Baxter (2019) is a member of the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi Indians from Niles, Michigan. Prior to his injury, he participated in baseball, basketball, and track. In 2016 he endured an incomplete spinal cord injury (T12), resulting in paraplegia. Shortly after, he was introduced to wheelchair basketball in South Bend, Indiana. Now, as he embarks on his freshman year at Michigan, he is excited to study biology with a desire to pursue a career in medicine, while playing wheelchair basketball and wheelchair tennis.

Alex Saleh (2019) is a native of Livonia, Michigan, but since there were no collegiate wheelchair basketball programs in the state, he attended Edinboro College in Pennsylvania where he studied Social Work and played on their wheelchair basketball team all four years. He lost his right leg to a serious infection when he was just two years old and has been playing adaptive sports for most of his life. He is now starting a master’s program in the School of Social Work and is looking forward to using his knowledge of adaptive sports to help build our program here while continuing to compete and advance his own education.

Caiden and Alex have assumed leadership roles within the program and the sponsored student organization, teaching others and running the wheelchair basketball drop in sessions. They will represent the University at the Collegiate Wheelchair Tennis National Championships in April 2020, in our first national intercollegiate competition.

Other talented student-athletes from across the country have applied, including several Paralympic High School All-Americans and world record holders, and we hope to be able to support as many of them as possible.
OUR WORK CONTINUES

Over the next year our work will be focused on:

- Cultivating and solidifying partnerships with other campus units
- Working closely with Student Life to enhance the experience of students with disabilities
- Strengthening relationships with organizations such as the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA), United States Tennis Association (USTA), US Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC), Great Lakes Adaptive Sports Association (GLASA), NuMotion, The Ryan Martin Foundation, Per4Max, and Guardian Life
- Continuing our work with the Departments of Family Medicine and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Michigan Center for Human Athletic Medicine and Performance (MCHAMP), and Exercise and Sports Science Initiative (ESSI)
- Working to increase partnerships and sponsorships with corporations and foundations. Two major companies, Masco Corporation and NIBCO Inc have recently provided corporate support
YOU CAN HELP

Help the University of Michigan realize its adaptive sports vision. With your contribution, you will be investing in the well-being, individuality, and dignity of all who learn, work and heal at U-M. As the adaptive sports program grows, donor gifts will be used to:

- Create more student-athlete scholarships in adaptive sports
- Assist students with tuition, housing, books, supplies, mobility equipment, athletic equipment, childcare, and more
- Create accessible facilities
- Support travel to competitions, camps, and conferences in order to participate and recruit prospective student-athletes, coaches, and staff
- Purchase adaptive equipment, sponsor events, and cover court time
- Support internships, fellowships, and professorships in adaptive sports and adaptive sports medicine
- Support research on the many impacts of adaptive sports
- Recruit faculty members to implement the vision
- Fund lectures on disability related topics
- Support our Sponsored Student Organization

To partner with us or for more information, please contact:

Amy St. Amour
Associate Director, Family Medicine
Michigan Medicine Office of Development
734-645-0423 | astamour@umich.edu
ABOUT DR. OKANLAMI

Dr. Okanlami (“Dr. O”) is more than just a doctor – he is an advocate and mentor for others with disabilities, leading the efforts of the Adaptive Sports Program with firsthand knowledge of the benefits of adaptive sports.

Born in Nigeria, he and his family immigrated to the United States. He attended Stanford University where he was an academic All-American athlete in track and field and the team captain for his last two seasons. He graduated from U-M Medical School in 2011 before acquiring a spinal cord injury in 2013 during his residency program at Yale.

After two surgeries and intensive rehabilitation, Dr. Okanlami completed a master’s degree in Engineering, Science, and Technology Entrepreneurship at the University of Notre Dame, and subsequently completed his family medicine residency at Memorial Hospital in South Bend, Indiana.

During his time in Indiana, Dr. Okanlami was appointed by Former Mayor Pete Buttigieg to serve on the St. Joseph County Board of Health. He also served as the vice president of the River City Challenged Athletes, a non-profit that supports local adaptive sports, and was the chairman of the Capital Campaign for St. Joseph County Clubhouse, a community organization for people with serious mental illness.

Dr. Okanlami has given numerous Grand Rounds Lectures and Keynote Addresses on topics ranging from disability inclusion or adaptive sports specifically, to diversity, equity, and inclusion more broadly.

In 2017 Michiana presented Dr. Okanlami with a “Forty Under Forty Award for his work ‘Disabusing Disability®,’ where he hopes to demonstrate that disability does not mean Inability, and he has since partnered with Guardian Life to do the same, creating the “Equal & Able” campaign.

In late 2019, Dr. Okanlami was featured by Robin Roberts of Good Morning America. His interview appeared as a part of her series, “Thriver Thursdays”. To listen to the interview, click here.
LEARN MORE

If you are interested in learning more about our programs and other recent progress made to increase inclusion for those with physical disabilities, we are pleased to share with you:

Videos/Press Releases

University of Michigan Adaptive Sports Video:

MDisability Family Medicine Program Video:
https://vimeo.com/321099874

United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee Name Change Announcement:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiuQwJALLOE
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvZ24ysz9t8

Canada Tire “Wheels: We all Play for Canada” Commercial:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFuWUlho-WI

Examples of Other Collegiate Programs

University of Alabama Adapted Athletics Video ($10mil facility):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blxfoWaEz1w

Michigan State University Adaptive Sports Program:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gl2yVZ2GaETM

University of Illinois SSD Office equivalent support of Adaptive Sports:
http://disability.illinois.edu/athletics

San Diego State Aztec Adaptive Sports:

University of Arizona Adapted Athletics Recent article:

Examples of Programs Tied to Healthcare Networks

Mary Free Bed Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports:
https://www.maryfreebed.com/rehabilitation/sports-rehabilitation/wheelchair-adaptive-sports/

Spaulding Rehabilitation Network Adaptive Sports:
https://spauldingrehab.org/conditions-services/adaptive-sports

Shirley Ryan Ability Lab Adaptive Sports and Fitness:
https://www.sralab.org/services/adaptive-sports-and-fitness-program

Apparel
https://shop.undergroundshirts.com/collections/michigan/adapted-athletics