



# A Quality Path To Excellence

## An Interview With Oscar Bronsther MD

I recently sat down with Dr. Oscar Bronsther, INTERLINK's Chief Medical Officer, to learn more about his impressive career and passion for transplant medicine. Here are some highlights from our conversation:

### Dr. Bronsther's Path to Transplant Surgery

Dr. Bronsther knew from a very young age that he wanted to be a surgeon, not just a general physician. He was first exposed to the operating room at age 11, when his father – a prominent pediatric surgeon – was able to bring him in to observe. This early experience sparked his lifelong fascination with the technical challenges and medical complexities of surgery.

After medical school, he was drawn to the field of transplant surgery, particularly liver transplants, which he found to be the "most technically challenging operations done routinely." He appreciated how transplant required a deep understanding of immunology, physiology, and advanced surgical skills.

### Pioneering Advances in Transplant

Dr. Bronsther had the privilege of working alongside the "grandfather of liver transplantation," Dr. Thomas Starzl, during a transformative time in the field. He was present for the introduction of critical immunosuppressant drugs like cyclosporine and tacrolimus, which dramatically improved transplant outcomes.



## MEET DR. BRONSTHER

### A Look Into Our Chief Medical Officer's Impressive Career

Dr. Oscar Bronsther is a nationally recognized transplant surgeon, educator, and healthcare leader with decades of experience in complex surgical care, organ transplantation, and oncology innovation.

#### Education & Training:

- 1969–1973: B.A., University of Rochester
- 1974–1978: M.D., Downstate Medical Center
- 1978–1983: General Surgery Residency, Mount Sinai Medical Center
- 1983–1984: Kidney Transplant Fellowship, Downstate
- 1984–1985: Liver Transplant Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh

#### Academic Leadership:

- 1984: Assistant Professor, UC San Diego
- 1989–1994: Assistant Professor, University of Pittsburgh
- 1994–2001: Associate Professor, University of Rochester
- 2002–Present: Clinical Professor, George Washington University



"The biggest advance in transplantation during my career has been the introduction of effective immunosuppression," he shared. "That's really what allowed transplant to advance – we went from 25% survival rates to over 90%."

One key message Dr. Bronsther wants to share is the critical need for more organ donors. He explains that we have the ability to transplant more patients than we currently do, but are limited by the inadequate supply of available organs. Liver disease can stem from many causes beyond just alcohol abuse, yet the public often assumes liver transplants are only for alcoholics. In reality, dozens of diseases can lead to liver failure that can be treated with transplantation. However, the demand for livers far outpaces the supply of available organs. A single donor can save the lives of multiple people by donating their heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, and other organs. While advancements in xenotransplantation (using genetically modified animal organs) hold promise, human organ donation remains the best option. He encourages everyone to consider becoming an organ donor and helping to save lives.

## Commitment to Quality at INTERLINK

After decades of experience as a pioneering transplant surgeon, Dr. Bronsther now brings his expertise to INTERLINK as Chief Medical Officer. He is deeply committed to the organization's focus on evidence-based, quality-driven care.

*"We always try to do what's right," he explained. "We think we can serve two masters simultaneously – meeting the needs of our clients while never compromising outcomes for patients."*

In addition to his expertise in transplant surgery, Dr. Bronsther has also played a key role in developing INTERLINK's CancerCARE For Life program (CancerCARE). Though his background was primarily in hepatobiliary and transplant surgery, which involved treating many cancer patients, Dr. Bronsther was recruited by INTERLINK's previous Chief Medical Officer, Ron Potts, to help build out the CancerCARE services.



**Dr. Bronsther & Dr. Starzl transporting an organ for transplant**

## Dr Bronsther's Achievements continued ...

### Clinical & Administrative Roles:

- 1994–2001: Director of Solid Organ Transplantation, University of Rochester
- 2007–2013: Chair of General Surgery, Inova Fairfax Hospital
- 2002–2013: Director of Transplant Services, Kaiser Permanente
- 2005–2007: Chairman, National Transplant Network Board
- National roles include leadership on UNOS, Red Cross, and Kidney Foundation committees

### Academic Leadership:

- 2016–Present: Chief Medical Officer, CancerCARE/INTERLINK
- 2016–2019: CEO, ERAD Therapeutics (Orphan Drug R&D for Tay-Sachs and Gaucher)
- 2012–2015: CEO & CMO, Metastat (Metastatic disease diagnostics)
- 2014–2015: CEO, ASET Therapeutics (Precision oncology R&D)
- 2011–2021: Board Member, Vycor Medical (Minimally invasive surgical tech)

His extensive experience in surgical oncology made him well-suited to oversee the evidence-based, quality-driven approach of the CancerCARE program. He has worked closely with INTERLINK's leadership, including INTERLINK CEO John Van Dyke and The President of CancerCARE For Life Kris Atkins, to ensure the program delivers the best possible outcomes for cancer patients. Dr. Bronsther's commitment to excellence has been instrumental in making INTERLINK's CancerCARE a leading provider of comprehensive cancer care management.

He is proud to work alongside INTERLINK's dedicated team of nurse case managers, who he describes as "all very good to extraordinary" in their commitment to patients. He values the collaborative culture at INTERLINK, where everyone has a "seat at the table" to share ideas.

His inspiring story reminds us that even in the face of daunting challenges, true leaders find a way to make a profound difference. We are honored to have his expertise and passion guiding INTERLINK's clinical programs, as we work together to transform lives.

By following his example of relentless dedication, we can continue raising the bar for patient-centered care and making a lasting impact on the communities we serve. Dr. Bronsther's legacy will undoubtedly inspire the next generation of healthcare heroes to come.

*If you'd like to learn more about INTERLINK's Transplant Centers of Excellence, CancerCARE for Life program, or our evolving Gene and Cell Therapy solutions, we're here to help. These programs are designed to improve outcomes and guide smarter healthcare decisions. Reach out to your INTERLINK representative to start the conversation and explore how we can assist your team and your members.*

**Article by Antonina White, Transplant & Specialty Account Manager at INTERLINK.**

## Dr Bronsther's Achievements continued ...

### Research & Publications:

- Dr. Bronsther has authored more than 60 peer-reviewed journal articles and numerous book chapters. His research spans transplant immunology, surgical outcomes, and innovative therapies.

### Professional Recognition:

- Board certified in surgery since 1985 (recertified in 1995), he holds active medical licensure in Washington, DC. He has served as a peer reviewer for top journals such as Transplantation and Liver Transplantation.

### Fun Fact:

- Dr. Bronsther trained under **Dr. Thomas Starzl**, a pioneer in organ transplantation, and has lectured internationally on liver, kidney, and pancreas transplantation.



**Oscar Bronsther MD**