

Testimony – March 15, 2010
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

HB5027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER'S FACILITIES PLAN

Senator Handley, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, my name is Dr. Peter Albersten. I am here today to speak in support of **HB5027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER'S FACILITIES PLAN**

I am the Chief of Urology at the John Dempsey Hospital and program director of the urology residency that trains urologists rotating through John Dempsey Hospital, Hartford Hospital, St. Francis Hospital and the Children's Medical Center. I have practiced at the Health Center since 1987 and I have seen many changes in the Hartford community. One thing that has not changed is the physical environment in which I practice. The operating rooms, the inpatient floors and the ambulatory buildings are essentially identical to the facilities I practiced in when I arrived. During this time, urology has changed dramatically. We no longer remove kidney stones by making large incisions. Virtually all stones can be removed endoscopically or percutaneously. To accomplish these tasks, however, requires modern equipment that consumes increasing amounts of space in the limited size of our operating rooms. On the floors, monitoring equipment that previously did not exist, but that is now considered standard of care crowd our two bed rooms so that it is often difficult to round with my residents and makes it impossible to provide patients the privacy they expect.

Physicians at the Health Center are often asked to provide services unavailable elsewhere in the state. Private urologists in Connecticut no longer see patients with Medicaid, but we do. My residents and I routinely see Medicaid recipients with kidney stones from all corners of the state, including New Britain, Waterbury, New London, Bridgeport, Bristol and Torrington to name just a few. All of these towns and cities have hospitals, but no private urologists will treat them. Instead these patients are referred to the Health Center for care. I am dedicated to providing high quality care to all the citizens of Connecticut and high quality instruction to the next generation of Connecticut urologists, but this is becoming increasingly difficult as our facilities age. In two more months a flat bed trailer housing the temporary air handler will be towed back to the rear parking lot so that my urology ambulatory clinic will be air conditioned this summer. The original compressors failed over two years ago.

I urge you to support the HB5027. The facilities at the Health Center need to be modernized so that I can continue provide the quality teaching and clinical care that Connecticut citizens expect and that attracts residents from around the country to train at our facilities.