

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY : H.B. No. 5027
OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER'S :
FACILITIES PLAN. :
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: March 15, 2010

TESTIMONY OF LARRY TANNER, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER OF CENTRAL CONNECTICUT HEALTH ALLIANCE

Good morning distinguished committee members. I am very pleased to be here today to provide you with my testimony regarding Governor Rell's UConn Health Center proposal. Over my tenure as CEO of the Central Connecticut Health Alliance ("CCHA"), CCHA has maintained a strong relationship with the University of Connecticut Medical School and Health Center. We have both benefited from the advanced research undertaken at the center as well as from having residents apply and refine their skills at our New Britain General Campus. Many of our physicians have graduated from the University and many have maintained a teaching role. For the continued success of CCHA, other hospitals affiliated with UConn and the State, it is crucial that we invest in the future of the UConn Health Center. The areas the Governor highlighted in her proposal will not only help the University, it will help the local hospitals, it could increase the number of jobs in the State and it can improve the quality and access to care in the region.

1. **New Hospital.** John Dempsey Hospital cannot continue to serve its role as a teaching hospital in its current state. Although it was state-of-art when it is first built three decades ago, medical technology and the practice of medicine have changed so dramatically, that the current facility faces major difficulties in rendering today's care. As a hospital CEO, I personally can attest to the monumental efforts it takes to continuously improve and renovate our aging facilities. Operating rooms continue to grow in size as the equipment and complexity of the procedures evolve. MRSA and the control of infections has created the increased demand for isolation of patients. Outpatient procedural space have had to expand with the introduction of PET/CTs, Multi-Slice CAT Scanners, MRI, and Stereo Tactic Radio Surgery Systems. John Dempsey Hospital has had to follow suit and try to incorporate this into their aging facilities. A replacement hospital could be a long-term solution to this problem.

CCHA supports the choice to have Connecticut Children's Medical Center ("CCMC") assume ownership and management of the 40 Bed Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). The current proposal would allow the University to expand medical surgical bed capacity proportional to the transfer of NICU bed. We have been formally affiliated with CCMC for over a decade and our community and hospital have benefitted as we believe John Dempsey will. As John Dempsey Hospital is a key component in the regional NICU network which includes all of the affiliated teaching hospitals, this move will further facilitate and better coordinate the care and transfer of premature babies through all of our institutions. We look forward working with CCMC and the regional hospitals in facilitating this endeavor.

CCHA would like to work with the University in understanding the details of the new hospital. It is imperative that all the hospitals in the region have the right complement of beds to support future demand. What that complement is depends on what we are able to understand and predict about the changes in patient, physician, technological and disease specific needs are going to be. We look forward to working together to better understand the scope of this project.

2. **Simulation center at Hartford Hospital.** CCHA firmly believes in providing our residents and clinicians with access to the latest training tools. The Simulation Center is one tool whose benefit is immeasurable. It allows for today's and tomorrow's clinician, to experience a realistic simulation in a controlled environment. Having the network work together in training and using the center has enormous benefits to not only CCHA, but to all participants. We hope that prospective students will be persuaded to attend the UConn Medical School because of the Simulation Center.
3. **Primary Care Institute at St. Francis.** Hospitals are faced with an ever decreasing number of primary care physicians as students increasingly select studying a medical or surgical sub-specialty. Common reasons include better financial rewards, better schedules and developing a single speciality skill set. This has resulted in a need for primary care in Connecticut. The goal of establishing a nationally recognized site for development of new models of chronic disease management and primary care delivery and education for all participants in the UConn Health Network is a creative proposal designed to address our primary care needs. With Connecticut's aging population, demand for primary care will grow. Along with it, we will experience an increase in chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, hypertension, and obesity. If we could work together with the University at better managing these diseases through better education and research, we will be better poised to respond to tomorrow's health care needs.

4. **Health disparities institute in the city of Hartford.** With a hospital in a medically underserved city like New Britain, where many of its residents are either on government aide or uninsured, we welcome this proposal as being the first step at helping hospitals who serve these patients. As a partner in the UConn Health Network, the medically underserved community of greater New Britain, will stand to benefit. We look forward to working with the university on further developing the training opportunities and the application of research findings on health disparities and to incorporate the plans of our system to collaborate in a multi-community endeavor.
5. **Institute for Clinical and Translational Sciences on Farmington Campus.** The key to a successful medical school is the strength of its research programs. CCHA firmly supports the growth of UConn's Institute for Clinical and Translational Sciences program. It attracts students, improves clinical outcomes, attracts larger grants and creates jobs. It is critical to the State of Connecticut that it's flagship state university invest in its medical research arm of its research offerings in order to be a top-tier public university. As a current partner in clinical trials with UConn, CCHA is willing to work together at achieving this goal.
6. **Establishment of bioscience enterprise zone.** Hartford County is a nationally renowned knowledge corridor due to its institutes of higher learning, leading companies, science centers and hospitals to name a few. The goal of encouraging businesses in the biosciences field to base their operations in Hartford County so that they can partner with the UConn Health Network partners will provide an economic stimulus to our local economy. We anticipate job creation, revitalization of business parks, growing populations of technically skilled workers all becoming the drivers of the State's economic engine. CCHA is excited about this potential and looks forward to working with the University on this goal.
7. **Nationally recognized cancer center at the Farmington campus.** Cancer care is a vital service that hospital's provide. The prevalence of the disease continues its course and the need to diagnose and successfully treat patients has become the focus of Connecticut's hospitals. As a primary site for Gynecologic Oncology research, The Hospital of Central Connecticut understands UConn's desires to build a strong cancer center that will attract larger trials and grants. Having a state-of-the-art comprehensive cancer center in central Connecticut will allow for better training and better patient care. CCHA would envision participating in these discussions and that the center would be complimentary to the existing programs in central Connecticut.

In closing, I believe that a strong UConn Medical School and Health Center results in strong partner hospitals. CCHA's hospitals are no exception. With many of our

physicians UConn graduates, we rely on the strength of the school, the availability of the research programs and the clinical practice space to provide the partner hospitals with world class students and physicians. We look forward to working with the UConn Health Network partners in doing what's best for our State's medical school and hospitals and see the Governor's proposal as an exciting start. Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony.

Laurence A. Tanner

Chief Executive Officer
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