

Testimony of Sanford Cloud
Vice Chair, UConn Health Center Board of Directors

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
March 15, 2010

Good morning and thank you, Co-Chairs Handley and Willis for hosting this very important hearing.

It is an honor for me to here today.

By way of an introduction, I have served on the Health Center's Board for four and a half years and am currently its Vice Chairman. As some of you know, I am a lifelong resident of the Hartford region and also had the distinct privilege for serving two terms in the State Senate – so I keenly appreciate your hard work and service to the people of Connecticut.

Today, I'm joining my colleague Dr. Burrow and colleagues from the University's Board of Trustees in thanking Governor Rell for presenting the proposal she unveiled last week to create an innovative, regional health care network.

This morning, I'm urging you to contemplate this proposal from a much larger vantage point than the Health Center's campus in Farmington. Indeed, I'm asking you to consider how this proposal could transform the entire area into a "healthcare destination" for patients, physicians, dentists, aspiring doctors and other health professionals, as well as researchers and innovators.

The transformation starts with a reinvigorated, strengthened university hospital that Dr. Burrow outlined. This will pave the way for the many regional partnerships articulated in the Governor's proposal and surely, additional collaborations that will be fostered and developed in the years ahead.

Beyond Farmington, the Governor's proposal allows existing relationships with regional teaching hospitals – hospitals that already partner with UConn – to reach a higher level through the following initiatives of new "**UConn Health Network**":

Primary Care Institute: This will be based at St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center and will allow partners to work collaboratively to address the shortage in primary care physicians. The Institute will focus on training more primary care doctors while pursuing and obtaining new funding for research on healthcare quality and effectiveness, and ways to bring new health information technology to the region.

Center of Excellence on Health Disparities Research: Working with all regional partners, the Center of Excellence will take a comprehensive approach to study and attempt to solve some of the glaring and costly disparities in healthcare delivery today– particularly among minority populations and families of lower socioeconomic status. With support from the Cobb Institute of the National Medical Association, and eventually with support from federal funding, the goals of the Center will include: 1) conducting applied research on health disparities in minority communities both in Connecticut and nationwide; 2) providing training opportunities for minority scientists in areas related to clinical research, health policy and analysis, and public health; and 3) sharing best practices

in the delivery of quality healthcare within minority communities. It is expected that within five years, the Center would be supported by more than \$4.5 million in external grant funding, corresponding to more than 80 new jobs for the region.

Simulation Center: Based at Hartford Hospital, this new state-of-the-art center will offer sophisticated training for physicians and healthcare providers throughout the region – and beyond. It builds upon Hartford Hospital’s nationally-recognized programs in robotic and minimally invasive surgery and will attract new federal funding targeted to enhance medical education. At the same time, it will create new jobs for faculty, administrators and technicians who are part of the new center. This will be a critically important teaching tool for the next generation of healthcare providers and to continually meet the educational needs of today’s physicians and practitioners.

National Comprehensive Cancer Center: This initiative will take the UConn Health Center’s existing base of basic and translational research into the prevention, detection and treatment of cancer to a much higher level by pooling the resources of all regional hospitals and their respective cancer centers. This will create a wider audience for participation in clinical research and move our region toward a National Institutes of Health Comprehensive Cancer Center designation. It would clearly lead to improved care by opening the door to more clinical trials, new treatments, better technologies and the continual recruitment and retention of topflight physicians at all regional hospitals.

Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science: Already up and running, CICATS (pronounced see-cats) was created in partnership with regional hospitals, state agencies, and community health care organizations to transform the way biomedical science is conceived, conducted and disseminated in Connecticut.

Biosciences Enterprise Zone: Lastly, the Governor’s proposed network calls for the creation of a Biosciences Enterprise Zone to attract new commercial investment into the area, with a particular focus on the area around downtown Hartford. This will complement existing efforts within the University and the region to stimulate job creation, make way for new incubator space for burgeoning research ventures, and more.

Taken together, these initiatives will distinguish our region as a serious health care destination. Thank you for your time, your counsel and the commitment you have already demonstrated to the future of the University of Connecticut Health Center.