

Testimony of Jonathan Martin
CCMC Pediatric Neurosurgeon
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
Re: Governor's Proposed Budget
Friday, February 22, 2013

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak in this forum. I understand that the fiscal issues that are faced by this body are unprecedented in our lifetime, that solving them- and we must indeed solve them- will require sacrifice on the part of every Connecticut resident. I am here today to ask that we not place this burden on the shoulders of the children of Connecticut. I think we can all agree that they are the group least responsible for the budget deficits we face today.

As a pediatric neurosurgeon at Connecticut Children's Medical Center, I serve only a small fraction of the total number of patients seen at our facility on any given day. I do however provide care across the pediatric spectrum- from our neonatal and pediatric intensive care units, to our inpatient general care units, to outpatient clinics and the emergency room. Every day, I see first hand the best of what our facility has to offer. I assure you that the care provided by CCMC cannot be matched by facilities in our State that are not dedicated to the care of children. We provide care that requires a comprehensive team approach- technicians, therapists, nurses, and consulting physicians. None of this is possible without adequate funding. At CCMC, we do not have the luxury of elective adult care footing the bill, nor for private insurers to cover Medicaid losses to the institution. Over the past fiscal year, 43% of my department's total collections were Medicaid funded. For our facility to continue to provide care to the children of Connecticut, State Medicaid funding for CCMC must be maintained. Failure to do so will result in the loss of our ability to provide these valuable services to the children of Connecticut.

For the past 4 years, I have been available every other night as the tip of the spear that is CCMC Pediatric Neurosurgery. In a discipline where minutes can mean the difference between a life saved, and a life lost, I understand better than most the true value of the care our facility provides. I was asked this week by a number of parents to past and current patients to ask you: Members of the committee, who do you want answering the phone at 2AM when your child's life is at stake? If your answer is a trained pediatric provider dedicated to the care of children, I appeal to you both as a physician and as a parent to maintain adequate Medicaid funding for Connecticut Children's Medical Center in this and future budgets.

The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children.
~Dietrich Bonhoeffer