

**TESTIMONY OF  
IAN TUCKER, MD  
FAMILY PHYSICIAN AND VICE PRESIDENT OF MEDICAL AFFAIRS  
JOHNSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
Friday, February 27, 2015**

**HB 6824, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending  
June Thirtieth 2017, And Making Appropriations Therefor And Other  
Provisions Related To Revenue**

My name is Dr. Ian Tucker, and I have been practicing medicine in eastern Connecticut since 2001. My family medicine practice is located in Somers. I serve as Vice President of Medical Affairs at Johnson Memorial Hospital, where I have also treated patients as a hospitalist, in the wound care center, and in the Emergency Department. In addition, I currently serve as President of the Tolland County Medical Society.

I've wanted to practice family medicine since I was a child. I like the idea of being a stable part of the community and taking care of the people in that community. My patients count on me, and I have a warm relationship with them. They, and I, also count on our community hospital to be there as well.

I am increasingly concerned about the financial constraints placed on Connecticut hospitals from government underfunding and from the hospital tax. I can't stress enough how hard it is for community hospitals such as Johnson Memorial to survive. I've seen what hospitals and administrators go through – how hard they fight to keep the hospital viable, and to develop and expand services to meet the needs of the people they serve.

I have witnessed firsthand the struggles that hospitals face today. Barely a month goes by without some kind of financial challenge that they have to overcome. A new MRI machine costs a million dollars. Hospitals need to upgrade their equipment, fix their roofs, and keep the lights on. At the same time, when someone comes to our ER needing an MRI or surgery, for example, we deliver the care first and then seek reimbursement. Unfortunately, the reimbursement is not always there or is not adequate. But our care always is.

Johnson Memorial, like other hospitals in Connecticut, is part of the fabric of the local community and is very much needed. Many of the patients I care for are elderly and rely heavily on their community hospital. It's a major challenge for some of my patients to drive to the next town; having to drive to a city such as Hartford, if their community hospital was no longer there or could no longer offer the services they needed, would be insurmountable.

I ask your help in supporting and preserving our Connecticut hospitals. Thank you for considering my testimony.