

Testimony of Dr. Rebecca Andrews

**Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing February 10, 2016**

Re: UConn Health Budget Proposal

To the Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee,

My name is Rebecca Andrews and currently I am a physician at Uconn. I wanted to take my time to tell you my story and why funding to Uconn Health is so important. I came here from Boston to attend medical school. UConn was the only medical school that kindly offered in-state tuition to those of us that attend from other states. This concern for our financial health as medical students was the reason I chose UConn over Dartmouth, having been accepted to both. My thought was simple - if the community cared for me before I even arrived, I couldn't imagine the support I would have once I arrived.

As you know, medical school and residency training can be quite arduous emotionally, mentally, and physically. The support from the education community of UConn Medical School is the reason I initially came, but it kept me there for my internal medicine residency, and brought me back after three years of practice in the community. My position now is three-fold: I serve as one of the associate program directors for that same residency program that trained me; as an active clinician; and as an educator. I have gladly given back to the health center that trained me for the past 7 years.

I hope my story and my thanks for all of your incredible support for UConn Health have illustrated you have made it a great university that is making a real difference to UConn students and our state. Our progress over the last ten years has propelled UConn to the top of its field because of these investments. Currently, UConn Health has earned a partnership grant from CMMI as part of a practice transformation network that makes it one of a few in the country. This is something to be proud of, just one example of the many achievements that UConn Health has been able to accomplish with the support it receives from the state.

Every year the state budget is discussed I think of the difficult decisions that need to be made. I have no advice for these challenges, but I hope my letter has convinced you of the value UConn Health and the Medical and Dental Schools bring to not only our state, but now our nation's healthcare. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments as I urge you to minimize the cuts to UConn Health. The budget cuts being discussed would hurt a variety of our initiatives, but notably in my world would be our practice transformation initiatives that I mentioned above. The collaboration of our health system with UMass has the potential to reform how we practice medicine, including significant cost savings that may become a model for the rest of the country.

Let me thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you. UConn Health serves all of our state – they are our students and patients, and we hope to be able to continue these ventures in the future.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Andrews MD