

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on UConn Health's Budget

February 10, 2016

Esther C. Muscara

Good Evening,

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, I am Esther C. Muscara, a 68 year old woman with Coronary Artery Disease. I am a resident of Terryville(Plymouth).

I would like to thank you all for your incredible support for UConn Health. Through state investments in UConn Health and regular investments in the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine, you have made it a great university that is making a tremendous difference to, not only UConn students, but to our state and all of its residents.

I consider myself to be fortunate to have been able to choose UConn Health as my provider at the time of my recent medical emergency. You see, I awoke with very vague aches on the morning of 24 June 2015. Although I never experienced anything other than mild "pressure" on the top of both shoulders, I just had an "uneasy" feeling about these symptoms. After alerting "in-house" family members, Plymouth EMS was called and they responded within 5-10 minutes. Upon administering an EKG, it was determined that, as suspected, I WAS having a heart attack! Due to my physical symptoms not being severe (no shortness of breath, no loss of consciousness, pain controlled by single dose of Nitroglycerin) I was advised of my options regarding the facility that I could go to for evaluation of my condition. I elected to seek help at UConn Health (John Dempsey Hospital) due to my confidence in a teaching hospital as well as the recommendation of the Paramedic who was in attendance. It was completely my choice and at no time did I feel that I was being influenced by anyone! En-route to the hospital, I began to experience moderate to severe chest pain which resulted in a true "TV style" arrival at the Emergency Department (ED), IE: ED staff waiting for my arrival as the doors of the ambulance were thrown open. As I was rushed into the ED, I was quickly hooked up to an EKG, and staff explained that I would be going straight to the Cardiac Cath Lab where Dr. Lee advised that I was currently experiencing a blocked coronary artery and steps would be taken quickly to resolve that blockage. Soon after that, I was awakened by Dr. Lee, who explained that, my Right Coronary Artery had been blocked, but a catheter, with a small "stent" had been threaded through the artery in my right wrist to my coronary artery. He showed me a "still" of the angiogram which was a "before/after" view of the blocked artery and then a view of it clear and patent. I was brought to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and 24 hours later was transferred to the "Step Down Unit", to begin preparing for discharge home which occurred on Friday, 26 June 2015.

I relate all of this because I was so very fortunate that this fine facility was available to me. Had it not been, the end result may have been very different! I urge you to minimize the budget cuts to UConn Health as I feel these budget cuts will adversely effect the progress made at this facility. UConn Health IS a shining example of what is good about about the state of Connecticut. Let us continue to be proud of the caliber of training our future Medical and Dental professionals receive as well as the level of excellent medical and dental care the citizens of the state of Connecticut are offered.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you and for your ongoing support of UConn Health. I would hope that you will find a way to restore or prevent any cuts to the UConn Health budget for the benefit of students, patients and the future economy of the state of Connecticut.

Esther C. Muscara, Terryville, Connecticut