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Monika Furtak, Lead Dental Assistant
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Committee, my name is Monika Furtak and I am a Lead Dental Assistant at UConn Health.

There are over forty-five dental assistants that are employed at UConn Health. Please be aware we have eleven specialties in the department at the hospital and we provide affordable dental care for patients. Furthermore, UConn Health is the only establishment that has an emergency clinic after hours. We also have on-call residents who take care of emergencies which are affordable and less expensive. There are many reasons why UConn should stay public. UConn Health employs many people, there are many benefits for employees, the institution provides job security for staff, and there is an opportunity for students, residents, and dentists to learn in an academic medical setting. Because of UConn, low income individuals can afford dental care and prevent other health issues like oral cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.

Our hospital sees patients who are denied dental care in a private setting because of their health conditions like physical disabilities, behavioral difficulties, PTSD, etc. We have low income patients traveling from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and other states just to see a provider.

Today everyone looks for job security and health insurance for their families. UConn is able to provide these benefits to their employees. Employees are able to raise their families and work fixed hours so they can have a peace of mind and not need to worry about the possibility of losing their job the next day. UConn Health also provides education and professional training opportunities for all staff. Yet now the students and care givers, who pay taxes, have to worry about those benefits coming to an end so the state can save a dime. Nowadays everyone looks at the dollar amount; however, they tend to forget about the people who are in the public health field that dedicate their time to provide services to people who are in desperate need of healthcare.

Please know your decision will affect your citizens, and will have a huge impact on our lives and the lives of our patients and families. Please continue to fund UConn Health so we can continue to provide quality care for the State of Connecticut and all its citizens. Thank you.