

## Testimony for the Appropriations Committee

Dear Appropriations Committee,

I am an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and a Faculty member in the Division of Hematology and Oncology.

My first experience at the UConn Health Center was in 2003 during the UConn College Summer Research Fellowship Program. I was a college student at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and searched for an opportunity in my home state of Connecticut that would introduce me to research. I spent the summer researching the oncogenic mechanisms of cyclin D1 in transgenic mouse models in Dr. Andrew Arnold's lab in UConn's Center for Molecular Medicine. This experience sparked my interest in basic science and medicine and provided me with strong mentorship. I was invited back to Dr. Arnold's labs for two subsequent summers.

I graduated from Smith College in 2005 with a major in Biological Sciences and minor focuses in Chemistry, French, and Dance. For the following two years, I worked at UConn Health and the Area Health Education Center teaching Connecticut's underserved high schools students about healthcare careers under the direction of Dr. Bruce Gould. I volunteered with my high school students through UConn's Migrant Farmworkers program, a program committed to providing Connecticut's seasonal farmworkers equitable health care. I obtained a Master's Degree in Biomedical Sciences at Tufts University and worked as a Clinical Research Coordinator at the Massachusetts General Hospital. My thesis work examined racial and ethnic disparities in perioperative care. I aspired to attend medical school and my ultimate first choice was UConn. I was thrilled to gain acceptance and begin my medical training at the UConn School of Medicine. As a proud daughter of a teacher and a carpenter and the first person in my family to pursue medical education, UConn helped support me financially. I was delighted to match at UConn for Internal Medicine residency under the leadership of Dr. Steven Angus. I developed a special interest in global health and traveled to Uganda for patient outreach work as part of the UConn Global Health Program under the direction of Dr. Kevin Dieckhaus. Throughout both medical school and residency at UConn, I continued to participate in UConn's Migrant Farmworkers program. I felt humbled to receive the Richard A. Garibaldi, MD Humanitarianism in Medicine Award from the UConn Internal Medicine Residency Program. My dedication to teaching during residency led to my selection as Chief Resident, and I spent a year educating the residents and medical students at UConn. I felt honored to receive teaching awards from the residents and medical students.

I started my Hematology and Oncology Fellowship at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and taught a Hematology course to the medical students. I expanded my teaching efforts on a global level by traveling to the Butaro Cancer Center in Rwanda, East Africa. I cared for patients and taught clinicians in the country's first cancer hospital. This served as a springboard for teaching and leading a virtual Global Oncology course between Rwanda, Dartmouth, and others. My education as a clinician and my growth as a person are deeply enriched by my prior global health experiences in the low-resource settings of Rwanda in 2019 and Uganda in 2016.

Upon completion of my Fellowship in Hematology and Oncology at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, I was lucky to receive several job offers. In choosing my first faculty position, I was delighted to return to UConn to start my career as a Hematologist and Oncologist with a special focus in education and Global Oncology. UConn has given me countless opportunities and has shaped the doctor I am today. UConn's dedicated faculty, exceptional educational training, congenial nature of employees, opportunity for growth, and the close proximity to my family are some of the myriad of reasons I desired to return here for my first faculty position. I am excited to be back at the institution that has given me so much over the last 18 years.

I believe UConn is the ideal place to launch my career and is a leader in patient care, education, outreach to the underserved, and research. My current position at UConn offers me the chance to care for patients in the rapidly-expanding field of Hematology and Oncology. I am able to teach medical students, residents, and Hematology and Oncology Fellows. I also have the opportunity to expand our global outreach in the Global Oncology field. I will strive to teach and inspire the physicians of tomorrow in a field that involves lifelong learning and enthusiastic mentors as much as the UConn staff has taught and inspired me during my career.

On behalf of UConn Health, I thank you for your support. I ask for your continued commitment to UConn Health and the state of Connecticut. Thank you for permitting me to advocate for UConn Health's crucial role in patient care, education, and research.