

**Testimony of
Ibrahim Elali M.D., FACP Assistant Professor of Medicine
President Of UCHC-AAUP
Before the
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
March 4, 2021
RE: UCONN HEALTH BUDGET**

In support of the Appropriations Budget and a two-year moratorium on privatization

I thank the members of the Appropriations Committee for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to speak this evening.

My name is Ibrahim Elali, I'm an assistant professor of medicine, a nephrologist teaching and practicing at UConn Health, and I'm the president of UCHC-AAUP. We represent over 600 physicians, dentists, and researchers who are faculty members at the UConn School of Medicine, School of Dental Medicine, and research scientists at UConn Health.

UConn Health is the only public academic medical center in the state of Connecticut. It is nationally recognized on different venues, including medical education, innovation, clinical research, and attracts scientists from all over the world.

UConn Health would be profitable, with employee fringe rates comparable to neighboring institutions, if it wasn't for the State imposed surcharges (\$53m in FY 21) to cover Connecticut's historic unfunded liability costs.

UConn Health provides essential public access to world-class clinical care for all of Connecticut's citizens, including those on Medicaid, the underinsured and the uninsured. UCH ultimately generates more than \$2.2 billion in statewide economic impact every year.

- Our researchers are awarded over \$100 million in grants annually.
- UCH houses the state's only public dental clinic.
- Our medical and dental schools train tomorrow's physicians, dentists, and researchers; the single largest source of Connecticut's healthcare professionals living and working in the state.
- UCH provides opportunities for affordable medical and dental education, reducing healthcare delivery disparity.

UConn Health is a public academic healthcare delivery and a bioscience hub, part of a bigger picture. The recent COVID-19 pandemic showed us how important it is to have a public healthcare delivery system. We shouldn't be looking to jettison precious public assets that save lives; we should expand them.

We provide our residents with equal access to health care, with a mission to continue to provide our residents with the excellent, **affordable care** they deserve. UConn Health is home to a health care community; teaching, caring for patients, and conducting research for the public good. The constant threat of privatization prevents us, as a community, from engaging in the strategic planning conversations needed for future success.

Please consider supporting a two-year moratorium on any privatization effort or discussions. Please allow us the time to work with the administration in the development of a strategic plan reflecting innovation and ideas for expansion of services. Now, more than ever, our public academic medical center is vital to the future of Connecticut and beyond.