

Shivam Patel
February 27th, 2021

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Shivam Patel and I am a first-year medical student at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. I thank you all for your support of UConn and the UConn Health Center, and your investment in the future of Connecticut. Your continued support makes beautiful stories possible and I would like to share mine with you today.

I lived in India for most of my childhood before my family moved to South Windsor, CT in 2013, when I was 14 years old. When I moved to the United States, I was a lost immigrant who had difficulty navigating my new environment and the new school system. I was extremely shy, had very little confidence in my abilities, and was unsure about my place in my new community. Thanks to UConn, today, I am a completely different person. I have blossomed into a confident man, and a passionate advocate for my peers and my future patients. My experiences as a double husky as an undergraduate and now at medical school have ingrained in me the importance of healthy collaboration, advocacy, and leadership, which will allow me to be the best physician I can be. I am eternally grateful for having the privilege of attending the UConn School of Medicine which has provided me with the most enriching medical education I could have ever imagined.

Having a vibrant student community both inside and outside of class is one of the most important features of an excellent education. I was drawn to the UConn School of Medicine because at its heart it fosters a collaborative and diverse community. The University is truly supportive of students' overall development both inside and outside the four walls of the clinic. The Team Based Learning curriculum provides me with an environment to pick the brains of about 160 brilliant classmates in addition to the traditional methods of learning. The future of medicine is increasingly team-based and UConn is at the forefront of this model.

Outside the classroom, the University has given me the platform to care for the underserved communities of Connecticut through the Urban Service Track, which supplements the clinical knowledge I learn in class with first-hand experiences in serving vulnerable patient populations in the context of their communities. Additionally, the wellness committee at the UConn School of Medicine has been very supportive of my and my peers' efforts in starting a chapter of a non-profit organization known as Medical Minds Matter. This national organization, founded by UConn, Storrs graduates seeks to transform the narrative surrounding mental health within and outside the medical community through advocacy and storytelling. Finally, as the president of the Medical and Dental Student Government, I can attest to the incredible support students

receive from the administration in ensuring students have the opportunities to excel as well as the support to thrive mentally in a traditionally stressful career.

I truly believe I would not be the confident and compassionate young man I am today without the support of the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. I am thankful for all the programs and facilities offered by UConn which have transformed me into the person I am today and I look forward to giving back by practicing in Connecticut as a physician and a healthcare policy advocate. State funding of UConn Health makes my story and many others possible. I urge you to do everything in your capacity to ensure this wonderful institution continues to receive the funding it needs to ensure the best quality of life for Connecticut patients as well as the overall development of brilliant budding physicians.