

Testimony of Anne Reisch UConn School of Medicine –Class of 2023

2021 Public Hearing Re: UConn Health Budget

Good afternoon, I am Anne Reisch and I am a resident of Farmington, CT, and a second-year medical student at the University of Connecticut, School of Medicine. Thank you for your past support of UConn Health and for allowing me to write about my experiences.

UConn School of Medicine has a very unique curriculum. They utilize an integrated, team-based model that prepares students to become physicians who can work effectively in inter-professional team settings, which facilitates improved patient outcomes and quality measures. The curriculum is similar to a flipped-classroom. Students prepare materials before coming to class and use the instructional time to apply the knowledge to cases in a team setting. This fosters critical thinking and independence; physicians are required to continue learning and utilizing resources independently throughout their entire careers to improving their practice, and UConn is giving us the skills to do just that. UConn's curriculum expands beyond the basic sciences, encompassing clinical skills, patient advocacy, public health, and social justice, to name a few.

My favorite part of the second year is the amount of clinical education we receive, despite not yet being in our clinical years. I am enrolled in CLiC, a clinical longitudinal immersion course, where students are assigned to a primary care preceptor in their first month at school and go weekly for three years. There, I practice my clinical skills, including bedside manners, discussing sensitive topics, determining differential diagnoses, counseling, and more. I am amazed by how much I have learned so far, and am excited to apply this knowledge during my clinical years. Another course in second year is Clinical Reasoning, where we worked in a small team alongside a fourth-year medical student and practicing physician. We examine complex cases and consider pathophysiology, co-morbidities, treatment and management. It requires us to take our basic science background and apply it to real patients and evaluate the individual as a whole.

I would also like to add that UConn School of Medicine did a tremendous job transitioning its students to online learning during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. In March of 2020, during my first year, UConn transitioned its primarily in-person curriculum to entirely online. The transition felt smooth, and it was clear that a lot of effort had been placed into keeping students safe. In the fall, we transitioned to a hybrid model. During the hybrid model, UConn Health provided us with the protective equipment and found creative ways to ensure we would not fall behind in our training. For example, in our clinical skills course, we utilized mannequins and virtual patient instructors to practice our patient encounters and ensure we continued to receive the priming required to enter our clinical years. Also, the Student Affairs Department was always available to address any problem that arose. They assisted with navigating general concerns, COVID-19 exposures, and COVID-19 diagnoses. They made students feel heard and cared for during an unprecedented time and anxiety-provoking pandemic.

Medical School is not easy, especially when you are simultaneously amidst a pandemic. However, the University of Connecticut School Of Medicine has consistently proven that they do not shy away from a challenge. They face the problem head-on and develop creative solutions. They never fail to ensure that their graduates are well-rounded physicians that consider the person as a whole, regardless of the global circumstance. I have never second-guessed my decision to attend this medical school and know that I will be an excellent doctor because of it. And I assure you, you will not regret continuing to fund this public institution that provides Connecticut and its residents' first-class care. By supporting UConn Health, you are investing in the future of Connecticut. Thank you.