

Conceptual Framework For Hartford

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STORRS, CT — As part of the ongoing process to explore affiliations with regional hospitals, the University of Connecticut today released a conceptual framework document that calls for significantly enhanced ties between the UConn Health Center and Hartford area hospitals.

Earlier this year the Connecticut General Assembly passed legislation that charged the University and its Health Center in Farmington with developing a plan with the area's hospitals that would, through cooperation and collaboration, transform the greater Hartford region into a hub of health care delivery, medical education, leading-edge research and biomedical business activity.

In response, the University issued a Solicitation of Interest that sought proposals from interested organizations by Aug. 1. Four responses were received from St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Bristol Hospital, and a combined response from Hartford Hospital and The Hospital of Central Connecticut.

Since then, University leaders have been involved in discussions with the leaders of all the responding hospitals.

"While there are many perspectives to consider, we are pleased the discussions with all the area hospitals thus far have been quite encouraging and productive," said UConn President Michael J. Hogan.

"Of the four responses, the one from Hartford Hospital and The Hospital of Central Connecticut was the most comprehensive," Hogan said. "Accordingly, we have spent more time in discussions with their leadership."

From these discussions, the University and Hartford Hospital have developed a conceptual framework document that identifies Hartford Hospital as UConn's principal partner. This partnership will form the nucleus of a restructured clinical enterprise.

The conceptual framework also delineates a Connecticut Health Collaborative, comprised of a broad network of affiliates, including St. Francis Hospital, The Hospital of Central Connecticut, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Hartford Hospital and The UConn Health Center.

"These hospitals, through the collaborative, would seek to support the educational and research mission of all of the affiliates," said Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D., UConn's vice president for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine.

"This will be accomplished by expanding interactions with UConn's medical and dental students, interns and residents and broadening access to emerging science through the transfer of new knowledge to each hospital's workforce. The collaborative will also support efforts to organize and grow biomedical research in the region."

"The conceptual framework represents our thinking to date. It describes a collaborative model of working with the University that involves and benefits all the responding hospitals," said Hogan.

"Without question, moving it forward will not be easy. Many difficult issues, including financial issues, need to be resolved and significant challenges lie ahead," he said. "We remain convinced that cooperative arrangements

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among our region's hospitals as described in the conceptual framework provide the best opportunity to transform healthcare delivery, medical education and research while simultaneously generating increased economic activity throughout the Greater Hartford area.”

Transforming Health Education, Research and Clinical Care in the Greater Hartford Region: A Conceptual Framework

(1) The University of Connecticut and Hartford Hospital have joined with the other regional hospitals in an unprecedented effort to transform the Connecticut healthcare landscape. Their vision has two key components: the Connecticut Health Collaborative, which will include UConn, Hartford Healthcare Corporation, St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center, The Hospital of Central Connecticut, and Connecticut Children's Medical Center ; and

(2) the Principal Partnership between Hartford Healthcare Corporation (the parent company of Hartford Hospital) and the University of Connecticut Health Center (and its John Dempsey Hospital). Together, these two newly established relationships will bring significant energy, capacity and focus to the enhancement of healthcare delivery, medical education and research, and economic development in the Hartford region and, indeed, the entire state.

The Collaborative, to be comprised of a broad network of affiliates, will seek to support the educational and research mission of all affiliates by expanding their interaction with medical and dental students, interns and residents, and enhancing their access to emerging science through the systematic transfer of state-of-the-art knowledge to each hospital's workforce. It will also support the UConn School of Medicine in its efforts to secure (through the National Institutes of Health) a Clinical and Translational Science Award. This award would help to fund a new Connecticut Institute of Clinical and Translational Science, which will embody a shared commitment among the partners to organize, expand, and deepen biomedical research in the region. In addition, the Collaborative will also explore cooperative initiatives in allied health education and will undertake new efforts to enhance the health status of Connecticut citizens by using research to develop and disseminate new and successful models of care, particularly for underserved populations.

The Partnership will form the nucleus of the restructured clinical enterprise of the UConn Health Center. This will include the development of a University Hospital, located on two campuses: Hartford and Farmington. The Farmington facility will be owned by UConn, and will be operated by Hartford Healthcare; the Hartford facility will continue to be owned and operated by Hartford Healthcare. This University Hospital will have as an explicit goal its evolution into one of the nation's premier academic medical centers. It will be both the state's academic hospital and the core of Hartford Healthcare, attracting world class physicians, dentists, and other health care professionals, and will become a destination for patients seeking medical care that is informed by the most current developments in science. The University Hospital will be instrumental in advancing the School of Medicine's educational ranking, sponsored research funding, and clinical reputation. The University Hospital will similarly advance the national reputation and regional presence of Hartford Healthcare.

The University Hospital will maintain and operate its existing licensed beds and will have associated ambulatory care delivery sites. It will be the flagship teaching hospital for the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine and the primary site for the clinical research activities of the School of Medicine.

The University Hospital will have one medical staff, maintaining the highest standards of clinical care and clinical education. A model for a combined clinical faculty, with a common practice plan, will be developed. This aspect of the partnership will, in many ways, serve as the blueprint for the uniting of two different cultures through a single, shared vision. Employees of the Farmington facility will remain state employees and maintain their rights under collective bargaining agreements where applicable.

The Partnership will be a major force in moving the School of Medicine to Top Tier status and in establishing the Greater Hartford Region as a medical destination and a biomedical research powerhouse over the next decade. To

achieve this Top Tier status, the School of Medicine, working with the Collaborative, will need to grow significantly its research activity, including clinical trials, thereby creating many more research-related jobs in the region. Through shared governance, the partners will plan together, in furtherance of a new future in clinical education, research and patient care.

The Partnership will strengthen the economic vitality of all related facilities, the clinical faculty, the voluntary physicians, and the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine. In the short term, Hartford Healthcare will provide financial resources essential to the transformation of the academic programs in the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine; in the long term, the partners will negotiate the annual academic financial support to be provided by Hartford Healthcare and other sources.

The State of Connecticut will be a key contributor to, and a key beneficiary of, these collaborative efforts. The support of the State of Connecticut will be essential to the success of the endeavor. This will include investment, potentially in the form of capital financing for the replacement of John Dempsey Hospital (JDH) and operating support for the academic and research enterprise, as well as certain state-related expenses of JDH. The return on this State investment will be far-ranging: health workforce growth and enhancement; broader economic development spurred by bio-medical research; and improved health outcomes for Connecticut citizens.

Significant investments will also be made by Hartford Healthcare to address the needs of the Hartford and Farmington campuses. Investments by the State will lead to a mutually beneficial cycle of growth and financial sustainability in education, research and patient care which, in turn, will support the continued success of the new University Hospital, the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine, and regional health care, research and economic development. In addition to the existing national recognition of its innovative curriculum, the School of Medicine will achieve a level of research funding that would place it among the top 30 schools in national rankings. The elevation of both the School of Medicine and the School of Dental Medicine will be complemented by an expansion of their student enrollments, with each adding 20 members per class to their current student bodies.

The plan is as straightforward as it is complex: a joint venture of the state's academic medical center and the region's health care infrastructure to transform the Greater Hartford Region into a hub of health care delivery, medical education, leading-edge research and biomedical economic activity. The translation of the plan from vision into reality will not be easy. It requires a break from tradition and a commitment to innovative models of cooperation. Challenges lie ahead, but the potential for the state and for the City of Hartford is too great to let this opportunity slip through our grasp.

Appointment of Connecticut Health Education and Research Collaborative (PDF)