

CEO NEWS & VIEWS



Dear Colleagues:

Happy Spring! I hope you are all enjoying this precursor to spring. Even though in our hearts we all know we'll probably get at least one more big snow, I for one, am enjoying the moment. It's been a hectic couple of weeks.

Last week I went east and spent time in Washington, D.C. I had an opportunity to personally meet with almost every member of Colorado's congressional delegation. An exception was Congressman Perlmutter, with whom I was unable to schedule time, due to his exceptionally busy schedule. I did, however, get direct "face-time" with Senators Bennet and Udall; and Representatives DeGette, Polis, Tipton, and Gardner, as well as senior staff from the Senate Finance Committee. In each of these meetings, I was also joined by key health staff members and/or legislative directors. I used this annual trip as an opportunity to raise the flag for UCH, as well as address the major issues that we all at UCH have in common. I updated each on the significant role we play as Colorado's major teaching hospital and also as the second largest safety net provider in the state (more on that later). We discussed our governance structure and how we interact with the University of Colorado. In addition, we focused on our expansion projects and the implementation of Epic. Everyone I met with seemed to be quite impressed with the overall impact UCH has on the entire state.

As I mentioned, I felt it was very important to use the opportunity to educate all whom we met with about UCH's contributions to caring for Colorado's uninsured and underinsured. As you know, this is not part of our official mission; it is, however, the right thing to do for society. But given the rapidity of the growth in this area, it is not something we can continue to sustain without a careful balancing act. I also reminded our delegation that we receive no direct funding from the State of Colorado and that the only federal monies we receive are from federal Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) and "Provider Fee" funds. Each member of our congressional delegation was given a fact sheet and a state map broken out by congressional district. These showed that last fiscal year (2010), UCH provided uncompensated/charity care for nearly 52,500 people coming from every county in the state at a figure over \$260 million. We are, moreover, on track to provide nearly \$300 million of uncompensated care in the current fiscal year. The general reaction by our congressional representatives was both amazement and gratitude.

I had the chance to meet with Dr. Atul Grover, who serves as the Chief Advocacy Officer for the Association of American Medical Colleges. As many of you know, this is a very important group to me, given our strong partnership with the School of Medicine and as the academic medical

center of Colorado. It was a substantive meeting; in particular we discussed projected physician workforce shortages at a time when demands for health care and access to providers will be increasing. We expect a nationwide shortage of nearly 63,000 physicians by 2015. At the same time, both Graduate Medical Education (GME) and Indirect Medical Education (IME) funding are “targets” for budget and deficit reduction proposals. We discussed the need to maintain federal support for these vital funding streams, particularly for teaching hospitals, in order to keep graduate primary care and specialty physician training at optimum levels to meet workforce demands. In addition, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is a target for budget cuts and deficit reduction. Such cuts would specifically impact the amount and availability of research grants, and would therefore also have a significant negative impact on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.

The *US News and World Report* Rankings of medical schools were recently released. As Dean Krugman predicted two years ago, the university’s ranking dropped in research (due to spinning off the Department of Preventive Medicine and the Native American and Alaska Native Mental Health Program into the School of Public Health). Separately, the school’s NIH rankings for 2010 are a more desirable 27th of all 133 medical schools, and 12th for public medical schools. These are still impressive rankings to be proud of – all the more so considering how little the State of Colorado provides in direct support to our School of Medicine colleagues. All in all, it was a very successful trip. Whenever I return from a trip like that, I am reminded of all the good work happening here and how proud I am of this place.

Signs of Growth....Our expansion project is becoming more evident every day. Just this past weekend, a section of patient and visitor parking directly outside the AIP entrance was temporarily fenced off so our construction team could tackle what is affectionately known as the "make-ready" work. This involves doing some underground preparation and realignment of the driveway out in front of the AIP (all part of preparing for the real work on our new tower). It's a very short closure and the parking area will re-open to patients and visitors the week of March 28th.

As I write this, our expansion team is anxiously awaiting word from the City of Aurora for the go-ahead to begin grading and prep work on the temporary employee parking lot that will soon be located on the south side of Colfax Avenue. Once we receive the permit, it will be just a week or two to get the lot ready and then the domino effect will kick in. Approximately 900 of you will be graciously parking at this temporary lot so that a much reduced portion of the surface lot west of the AIP can be used by our patients and visitors while we finish building the new three-level structure that will provide them a total of 662 parking spaces. It's quite a process. And to make it easier to understand, we'll be posting maps and more information on the Hub, in the *Insider* and on our public site in the coming days. Printed information to give to patients that details all the closures and suggestions for making their visit go smoothly, is at the printer now and will soon be delivered to every clinic, information desk, valet and parking attendant.

Lucky Number 3 Again...For the third year in a row, UCH had three finalists for the Nightingale Award for excellence in nursing announced at the annual event last Saturday night. Our finalists are: Mary Krugman, RN, PhD, FAAN, NEA-BC, director of Professional Resources; Jaime Nordhagen, RN, BSN, charge nurse, Oncology; and Camy Boyle, RN, BSN, CCRN, nurse educator, Burn/Trauma ICU. Each year, these nominations serve as a testament and reminder of the great work our nurses do! Finalists will be selected May 14th, but these three are already winners in my book! Join me in congratulating them!

ZZZZZ....By the way, I took the health risk assessment and biometric testing a couple of weeks ago and have been receiving great digital information to deal with my insomnia. Good news for me – bad news for the rest of you since it means I am getting more sleep and have even more energy! I am looking forward to the \$120.00 in health care benefits credit! By the way, we extended the deadline until April 15th – thought you could use something good to associate with that date!

Have a great week.

Bruce

Your feedback is important, so if there's something on your mind, write to me at talktome@uch.edu