

Thank you Chairman Heinert and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Joshua Ranum and I'm a graduate of the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences currently practicing internal medicine in Hettinger. In my role as past president of the North Dakota Medical Association, I serve on the School of Medicine's Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council has discussed the proposed addition to the school of medicine building for the last several meetings and voted overwhelmingly in favor of the proposal. I am very much in favor of the plan as well and think it's very prudent for the legislature to reinstate funding for the proposed addition to the medical school building and demolishing the existing nursing and Columbia Hall buildings which are near the point of being unusable.

First of all, it's a wise investment – a one time expense which provides additional space and eliminates ongoing and deferred maintenance costs of two outdated buildings. From a fiscal and operational perspective the project is worth doing. A study, especially one requesting the input of the advisory council as the bill currently stands, will be in favor of the proposed addition to the medical school. Delaying this two years will only result in a more expensive or scaled back build.

Secondly, the commitment by Dean Jenkins and UND leadership to raise a substantial amount toward the addition shows the strategic importance of this project. It's not simply additional space or a nicer building. It's an opportunity to keep pace with healthcare evolution and redesign health profession education and collaboration. "Our buildings shape us" was a phrase used frequently during the planning and construction of the current medical school building and is applicable today. We have an idea of the positive change housing the health profession schools in one building will bring but there will be an even larger cascade of positive changes that stem from increased formal and informal collaboration between disciplines.

Those of us in western ND are very familiar with the natural resources found here being used to benefit the eastern side of the state. A legitimate question of the proposal is how would this benefit the rest of the state beyond UND? UND is not the only source of healthcare education in ND but it is the wellspring of training for the state. Go to any community across the state – Crosby, Hettinger, Harvey, Stanley and there will be a strong UND presence. The leap in training capacity that will come with this addition will allow the state to continue to attract and retain its best and brightest across all of the health professions. The advances in curriculum and training developed at UND will spread to other health profession training programs that serve our local communities. We still need other programs but there will be additional collaboration among programs as a result of the new training. Training our health profession students in the latest technology has tremendous potential to benefit our state's residents, particularly in rural and tribal areas. We can't rely on other states and institutions educating our students and then hoping they return. We need to continue being aggressive in cultivating our own talent.

Health care is complex and it is rapidly evolving. Great health care involves many hands on the patient, not just a physician making a recommendation to the patient. It's a team sport. This addition is not just physical space. It's an investment. It's a culture change. It is a major leap forward in how we train and prepare our future health care workers.

