

Brian L. Strom, MD, MPH
Chancellor

July 7, 2023

Adrienne Simonds, PhD, PT
Chair
Rutgers University Senate
Liberty Plaza, Suite 1250
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

Dear Dr. Simonds:

Thank you for your request for additional clarification. I am happy to provide it. First, I will confirm, on behalf of President Holloway and myself, that the Board of Governors will vote on July 10 on a resolution to continue the ongoing process to seek a single accreditation for an integrated Rutgers School of Medicine encompassing the New Jersey Medical School and the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

You and your Senate colleagues have asked for more detail asked about our responses to the Senate's resolution, and I would like to take this opportunity to elaborate upon and clarify our June 30 response to the enumerated concerns highlighted in the *Ad Hoc Review Committee to Review Proposal for Merger of the Medical Schools*, providing a more detailed and robust response to each of the Senate's concerns.

In summary, the Ad Hoc Committee "identified three (3) critical concerns which require more in-depth exploration to reach a decision", including (and quoting):

- C.1. Additional stakeholder consultation and support;
- C.2. Accreditation by Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) and residency placements; and
- C.3 Plan details on administrative structure, financial projections and branding.

In addition, the key concerns the Senate outlined in its resolution are (again quoting):

- R.1. More stakeholder consultation, including community and campus-based town halls with more thorough vetting by the faculties of the two schools;
- R.2. Broader stakeholder support, including detailed responses to our outstanding questions and concerns;
- R.3 More information on accreditation and residency placements; and
- R.4. Detailed information on fiscal concerns, administrative structure, and branding.

In response to points C.1. and R.1, please note that additional stakeholder consultation took place while the Senate was conducting its review, including two town hall meetings and others with community members, as well as continuing to collect input on the web page, where we have been transparent throughout this process. In addition, should the Board approve the resolution on July 10, the deliberative process to achieve accreditation for a Rutgers School of Medicine will need to continue, as to be memorialized through their proposed resolution. This will necessitate the participation of faculty, staff, students, and members of our shared governance bodies and substantial stakeholder engagement continued in parallel to the Senate's review, which would continue throughout the probable five-year process. Further, following the board action, Deans Johnson and Murtha would initiate a faculty summit, as proposed by the faculty committee, and additional consultation with and committees of faculty, to address with input from LCME some of the specific questions.

Further, in response to C.2. and R.2. the proposed Board resolution, quoted below and appended to this letter, acknowledges these outstanding concerns and mandates the following:

- “The specific implementation of the various aspects of the envisioned medical schools integration will still require more detailed planning about admissions, curriculum, campus culture, accreditation, residency placements, fiscal matters, administrative structure, governance, nomenclature, branding, and faculty affairs practices, as well as application to the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) of the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Medical Association, which will require additional planning up to and including faculty committee work, consultations with LCME in anticipation of a LCME site visit, followed by a LCME site visit, all of which require a commitment to initiating the above-mentioned synergies.”
- “As part of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education of the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Medical Association (“LCME”) medical school accreditation process, the RBHS Chancellor will engage in the development of further stakeholder consultation, communication, and support, particularly as it relates to the details of admissions, curriculum, campus culture, accreditation, residency placements, fiscal matters, administrative structure, governance, nomenclature, branding, and faculty affairs practices.”
- “On a biannual basis, the Chancellor shall report to the Board of Governors regarding the substance and progress of stakeholder engagement, questions that have arisen and the responses that have been provided, and significant milestones achieved in furtherance of the objectives described in this Resolution.” and
- “Consistent with the requirements of the accreditation process, the integration of RWJMS and NJMS will be conducted in a manner that promotes equitable representation and allocation of resources in the common administration of Rutgers School of Medicine.”

The third bullet above, requiring reports to the Board on progress and engagement, is an important way to ensure we are accountable in our process, demonstrating progress on key measures, including those areas of concern raised by the Senate.

In response to concerns about residency placement in C.2 and R.3., note that the inquiry conducted by ECG, completed in parallel to the Senate’s review, provides a detailed analysis indicating that students seeking competitive placements will not be adversely impacted by attending a Rutgers School of Medicine academic program. Another copy is appended.

Regarding C.3. and R.4., relating to administration, finances, and branding, please note that the proposed Board resolution reiterates that each component of a new Rutgers School of Medicine would retain significant autonomy, maintain its geographic integrity in Newark and New Brunswick, possess a separate budget and retain its own administrative structures. All these will be supervised by a local dean, acting as co-dean with their colleague similarly situated 26 miles away. However, additional details about day-to-day operations, finance, and administration will be developed as referenced in the resolution quoted above, as they “relate to the details of admissions, curriculum, campus culture, accreditation, residency placements, fiscal matters, administrative structure, governance, nomenclature, branding, and faculty affairs practices.” Quoting related text from the proposed Board resolution:

- “The Dean of RWJMS and the Dean of NJMS shall serve as “co-deans” of a jointly administered Rutgers School of Medicine, reporting directly to the Chancellor and representing the interests of the faculty, staff, and students of their individual medical school campus and supporting the implementation of integration into a singly accredited medical school. The Dean of RWJMS shall continue to maintain an office in the City of New Brunswick, New Jersey, the Dean of NJMS shall continue to maintain an office in the City of Newark, New Jersey, and the Chancellor shall continue to maintain offices in both the City of Newark and the City of New Brunswick.”
- “Consistent with the requirements of the accreditation process, the integration of RWJMS and NJMS will be conducted in a manner that promotes equitable representation and allocation of resources in the common administration of Rutgers School of Medicine. The RBHS Chancellor shall continue to administer both NJMS and RWJMS under Rutgers School of Medicine.”
- “As part of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education of the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Medical Association (“LCME”) medical school accreditation process, the RBHS Chancellor will engage in the development of further stakeholder consultation, communication, and support, particularly as it relates to the details of admissions, curriculum, campus culture, accreditation, residency placements, fiscal matters, administrative structure, governance, nomenclature, branding, and faculty affairs practices.”
- “Notwithstanding the foregoing organization under Rutgers School of Medicine, NJMS shall remain in the City of Newark, New Jersey, and University Hospital Newark shall continue to be the principal teaching hospital of NJMS.” and
- “Notwithstanding the foregoing organization under the Rutgers School of Medicine, RWJMS shall remain in the City of New Brunswick, New Jersey, and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital shall continue to be the principal teaching hospital of RWJMS, subject to the associated contractual agreements.”

As noted in the resolution above, we have an historical, ethical, contractual, and statutory commitment to healthcare in the City of Newark with University Hospital (UH) and we will not waiver from this commitment. Our commitment to providing high quality health care to the city of Newark is a foundational to our medical school's vision for the future. I have discussed this proposal with the leadership of UH and Chief Executive Officer & President Ed Jimenez has expressed support for moving this initiative forward. State statute mandates that UH is the principal teaching hospital of NJMS and the Newark-based schools of RBHS, and of course this will be honored. We also have a Master Affiliation Agreement and a Clinical Services Agreement with UH governing the services provided by NJMS physicians and a revised accreditation or Board action will not change that. To better care for our host communities, the proposed model will provide the platform to expand our portfolio of tertiary and quaternary services in Newark (as well as New Brunswick), launching new services to a wider patient base, thus saving more lives, maintaining health, improving outcomes and patient satisfaction, and reducing health care inequities and disparities. Today we cannot expand highly specialized services that we do not currently provide to either city without a commitment from that local principal teaching hospital to bear the full financial risk of the investment. Yet, out-of-network care for these services provided in NY or Philadelphia is cost prohibitive and inaccessible to those who cannot afford it.

In summary, even as the Board makes its determinations related to the proposal, we are committed to working with the University Senate, the RBHS Faculty Council, our faculty, staff, students, and community members in a process to develop a thorough and comprehensive proposal, consulting early with the LCME, and with sufficiently detailed information to satisfy the Senate's expressed concerns as detailed in your resolution.

Together I am confident we can build a world class medical school at Rutgers University that optimally fulfills all of our missions.

Sincerely,

Brian L. Strom, MD, MPH

c: Jonathan Holloway, PhD

Attachments