

A MEDICAL SCHOOL IN CHARLOTTE *Past, Present and Future*

A Joint Statement from Chancellor Carol L. Folt, UNC-Chapel Hill; Chancellor Philip Dubois, UNC Charlotte; Dean William Roper, UNC School of Medicine; and CEO Michael C. Tarwater, Carolinas HealthCare System

For many decades, many North Carolinians have dreamed about having a medical school in Charlotte. Indeed, the four-year UNC School of Medicine, which opened in Chapel Hill in 1952, might have been located in Charlotte instead. And many times it has been said that “Charlotte is the largest city in America without a medical school.”

Today Charlotte has a medical school – the UNC School of Medicine. This came about under the leadership of then-UNC President Erskine Bowles, the UNC Board of Governors, and with the support of UNC Charlotte, Carolinas HealthCare System and others. In 2008, they authorized the creation of regional campuses of the UNC School of Medicine in Charlotte and Asheville. These campuses, serving third- and fourth-year students, opened in 2009 and were accredited in 2010.

The UNC School of Medicine in Charlotte is a major part of academic medicine in North Carolina. At least two dozen third- and fourth-year medical students from each class receive their clinical education in Charlotte. The branch campus in Charlotte has its own parallel curriculum. This innovative design allows Charlotte medical students to have a longitudinal learning experience across many months in the same place, with the same faculty and the same patients.

Together with the important graduate medical education program at Carolinas Medical Center, which trains hundreds of resident physicians each year, and the growing research focus of UNC Charlotte and the Carolinas HealthCare System, the state of academic medicine is strong in Charlotte right now.

Some Charlotteans have recently said again that Charlotte needs an independent medical school of its own. We strongly believe that the current UNC School of Medicine in Charlotte is the best and most cost-effective way forward. Whatever steps are taken in medical education in Charlotte in the future should build on this strong foundation.

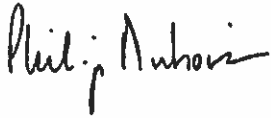
With increased funding there is room to grow the UNC School of Medicine in Charlotte and Asheville. The Board of Governors already approved an increase in class size from the current 180 students to 230 students admitted to UNC School of Medicine per year; that increase was not implemented because of constrained funding. Many more students can be educated at the UNC School of Medicine in Charlotte should the State of North Carolina provide the funding to do so.

In the long term and dependent upon significant amounts of state funding, we can envision a time when UNC Charlotte would become increasingly involved in providing certain parts of the UNC School of Medicine medical education curriculum for first- and second-year medical students. That kind of investment by the State of North Carolina would certainly produce additional benefits for Charlotte as UNC Charlotte continues its evolution as a major research institution.

We hope all will join with us to make the current UNC School of Medicine in Charlotte even more successful.

Thanks for your help and support,

Chancellor Philip Dubois, UNC Charlotte



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