



State University of New York

Upstate Medical University

01/24/08

President Smith Issues Statement on State Budget

The following statement was released today (Jan. 24) by SUNY Upstate Medical University President David R. Smith, M.D.:

The executive budget released this week by New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer seeks to balance the economic realities of the day with the governor's desire to plant the seeds of long-term economic growth for New York. It is a challenging task.

Closer to home, the budget holds promise that the university will be able to move forward on some key projects, the completion of which will provide benefits to our patients, students and greater community. It includes \$150 million in expanded bonding capacity for renovations to University Hospital. Lead by the updated, modernized rooms featured in the Vertical Expansion, the goal is to continue to modernize our existing structure, bringing greater efficiencies and comfort to our patients.

This bonding capacity also may accelerate our work in bringing a new state-of-the-art cancer center to the region. With the growing demand on our cancer services, this project is of a paramount importance to our regional healthcare mission. The proposed state budget supports our academic mission with an infusion of an additional \$1.6 billion in capital investments to SUNY campuses, which may well realize our expansion plans for the Institute for Human Performance.

To ensure funding for this project, we must continue to work closely with the SUNY Board of Trustees, which is in a position to prioritize funding. This research addition, along with our academic building, is integral to the recruitment of additional faculty, the increase in student enrollment and the overall growth of our academic enterprise.

And the spending plan looks to the future of healthcare, by committing to a loan repayment program for physicians who take their life-saving skills to rural and underserved regions of the state to help address the shortage of healthcare professionals. We believe that working closely with the state on this issue, we can provide new opportunities for our unique RMED program that introduces rural healthcare opportunities to our medical students.

While the executive budget may offer new opportunities for growth for SUNY Upstate Medical University, we greet it with measured optimism, especially in that it contains a 2.5 percent reduction in operational support for SUNY. SUNY operational support is vital to our mission. While such a reduction is not unexpected in this difficult budget

year, and we understand the challenges of crafting a spending plan that continues the state on a prosperous path with limited resources, we must find a workable solution and a compromise on this matter. To do so, we stand ready to work closely with SUNY, both houses of the state legislature, especially our local delegation, and the state health department.

As the budget process gets under way, SUNY Upstate Medical University--through a workforce of 6,500 strong--will continue to move ahead with its mission of serving the community through outreach, education, patient care and research.