January 14, 2016

A message to the Upstate Medical University community

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

I cannot imagine a better way to start the new year than beginning a new job, one that allows me to work with thousands of employees, faculty, students, patients, and volunteers who are engaged in the exciting and challenging work that takes place at SUNY Upstate Medical University.

An organization that has as its mission to improve the health of the community through education, biomedical research and health care is one that truly does influential work. This timeless mission can only be enhanced and bring greater reward as we strengthen our connectivity with our business partners, communities, health care organizations, SUNY campuses and with each other. This is the work that will be a hallmark of our efforts.

As a prelude to my first day at Upstate, I had the opportunity to be in the audience Monday for Chancellor Zimpher’s State of the University Address and to hear again the enormous benefit SUNY brings to New York State. SUNY’s emphasis on inclusion, diversity, access and opportunity reflects the work we are doing here and I am grateful for the system’s embrace of these important tenets of public higher education.

Since my selection as president in September, many people have provided me with valuable insights on Upstate and the issues we face. The transition process has enabled me to meet with many of you and to meet with our community leaders and elected officials. These early introductions are helpful to Upstate as we seek to strengthen and chart new connections with our community.

This transition process has ended in name only and I will continue our conversations throughout campus and in the community. As I noted earlier, it is important that I hear from all of you to work to create an inclusive, ambitious and visionary strategic plan for Upstate to be a leader in healthcare delivery, health professional education and research at the service of all of our communities.

In closing, I want to again take a moment to offer my deepest gratitude to Dr. Gregory Eastwood for his counsel and friendship, and on behalf of us all at Upstate, I want to thank him for his steady leadership of this institution.

Thank you all for welcoming my husband and me so warmly to the Upstate family and for your support as we embark together on this exciting venture. Happy New Year and let’s get to work!

Danielle Laraque-Arena, MD, FAAP
President, Upstate Medical University