Funding and Legislative Priorities

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
At the University of Rochester, we have brought together education, research, and commercialization to become a major hub of innovation and economic growth, and despite a challenging economy, we remain the largest employer in the region, and the seventh largest private employer in the state with 22,451 Full-Time Equivalent employees – an increase of over 3,700 FTEs over the last six years. The path-breaking ideas of our faculty, the achievements of our graduates, the quality of our patient care, and the creativity of our artists have a direct impact on job creation, economic development, and our overall ability to have a positive impact on the community.

Last fall, we announced an exciting new project to expand our work in the burgeoning field of data science. This $100 million commitment will include the creation of an Institute for Data Science, construction of a state-of-the-art building, and as many as 20 new faculty members with expertise in the field. This investment holds great opportunity for the translation of discoveries into the commercial sector, builds on key partnerships with New York State and industry partners such as Xerox and IBM, and continues the University’s long tradition of entrepreneurship, collaboration, and the development of new jobs and businesses.

The University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) and its hospitals – Strong Memorial Hospital, Highland Hospital, Thompson Hospital, and our newest affiliate, Strong West, formerly Lakeside Hospital in Brockport – is the safety-net provider and the largest, most specialized academic health care center in upstate New York. To ensure that our delivery system maintains its excellence and is able to meet the increasing demand for care generated by the implementation of health care reform and an aging population, academic medical centers such as URMC need adequate funding for graduate medical education to ensure our ability to train the necessary supply of physicians to meet our nation’s growing health care needs. This year, we are advancing a shared, community-wide approach to funding the medical education and healthcare infrastructure needs that will ensure access to medical personnel and will sustain the region’s reputation for high quality of care.

Our scientists have made tremendous progress toward unlocking the potential of stem cells to treat a variety of diseases and afflictions thanks to the Empire State Stem Cell Program (NYSTEM). At URMC, more than 40 stem cell labs employ 260 scientists and technicians, and the Upstate Stem Cell cGMP Facility which opened here in 2012 with support from NYSTEM is enabling these scientists to accelerate the translation of their research into human clinical trials and ultimately into new treatments.

Continued state support for the Laboratory for Laser Energetics (LLE) has helped us to lead the effort to achieve nuclear fusion, a potentially game-changing source of future energy that, unlike current nuclear power, is safe, cannot melt down, is carbon free and potentially inexhaustible. Since its inception, the LLE has attracted almost $2 billion to the state to support cutting edge research.

In the next five years, our campus will include College Town, a 500,000-square-foot, mixed-use development set to open later this year; an expanded Brooks Crossing; the new Golisano Children’s Hospital opening in 2015; an Imaging Sciences/Pediatric Ambulatory Building; and the new University Data Science facility to be built on the Science and Engineering Quadrangle. The new Interstate 390 road network, including a new exit at Kendrick Road, will accommodate this growth and more expansion into the future.

We are honored to work with Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and we look forward to all that we can accomplish together in the years ahead.

JOEL SELIGMAN
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Data science has emerged as one of the defining disciplines of the 21st century. According to IBM, every day we create 2.5 quintillion bytes of data—so much that 90 percent of the data in the world today has been created in the last two years alone. This explosion of data creation, capture and use has engendered a need to better understand the interrelation of data and its productive uses.

The University of Rochester intends to be among the world’s leading institutions in this burgeoning new discipline. The University is committing $50 million—in addition to the more than $50 million in previous support from the University, IBM and the State of New York—to greatly expand its efforts and to establish ourselves as an international leader.

Data science is defined as the concepts, methods, and applications for extracting meaning from large-scale data. The applications of data science are profound for science, medicine, and other domains of research. This initiative builds on current University strengths in data science including the New York State supported Health Sciences Center for Computational Innovation, active research in fields such as machine learning, artificial intelligence, and biostatistics, and our existing collaborations with companies such as IBM and Xerox.

Rochester researchers are already using big data to model and predict the spread of infectious diseases; track the popularity of political ideas; understand consumer preferences; predict the existence of planets; understand human origins; conserve resources; and tackle issues that were previously too difficult to address because of the lack of processes to collect, manage, sort, and analyze enormous data sets.

Rochester Center of Excellence in Data Science

The Rochester Center of Excellence in Data Science would be established at the University of Rochester and will be the first Center in New York State focused on data science. It will seek to establish the region and the state as a hub for new talent and a leader in analyzing and commercializing the limitless uses of data to improve quality of life and to fuel economic growth.

The proposed Center would be housed in a new, $25 million, 50,000 square foot, state-of-the-art building on campus that would be a magnet to the existing and future faculty. The Center will develop new discoveries, and new techniques, encourage rapid commercialization of scientific breakthroughs, and produce highly trained specialists that will have profound economic impact in this defining discipline in the 21st century.

The Center will build upon University infrastructure and accomplishments in data science, and would be significantly matured compared to past, newly-established Centers. While the new Center will bring leading, highly talented researchers, engineers, and computer scientists together with the necessary resources to empower collaborations in data science across all fields, the Center would initially focus upon three domains: Predictive Health Analytics, Cognitive Systems, and Analytics on Demand. The University is already a leader in tracking and developing methods to control the spread of infectious diseases, and is home to a world center for the collection and analysis of cardiac data. With cognitive systems and artificial intelligence, the University intends to focus on increasing our understanding of how the brain makes sense of the world. The third focus will be analytics on demand, and determining the appropriate tools required to analyze large scale data.

Economic Impact

An analysis by the Center for Governmental Research projects that the University’s Data Science initiative will generate more than 500 jobs (227 construction) both at the University and in the community. Currently, more than 100 principal investigators have been awarded a total of $307 million in research funding relying in part upon high performance computation during the past three years and more than 650 faculty, students, and research staff from more than 40 departments support computational and data-intensive research activities.

The Center will build upon existing University collaborations with companies such as Xerox and IBM to create the nation’s most advanced high performance computing health research center. Additionally, the Center will stimulate regional economic activity by generating innovative new technologies that can be spun off into commercial ventures and make the region attractive for relocation of existing companies.

With an expected national need of approximately 200,000 technical specialists and a greater need for managers versed in the field of data science, the Center would help meet the growing demand for training in this field and establish New York State as a magnet for talent. The University of Rochester has already customized a program of study for Xerox engineers to pursue an MS degree in data science, and work is underway to tailor an undergraduate program. Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, and nearly every other major developer actively recruit students from computer science at the University. Rapid development of other strengths in research and education in this domain will further advance our relationships with these and other major companies.

SUPPORT FROM NEW YORK STATE

The University thanks Governor Cuomo for including $327,119 in the 2014-2015 Executive Budget for the Rochester Center of Excellence in Data Science, and asks the New York State Legislature to provide the same level of support as the other Centers around the state. The University also seeks capital support for the Institute for Data Science.
A COMMUNITY SOLUTION FOR ROCHESTER’S HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE

Support Graduate Medical Education for the Rochester Region

Rochester’s health care system has the unique advantage of nearly a century of collaborative community planning and has long distinguished itself as a community able to develop innovative, cooperative approaches to health care financing and delivery. It has been done so by bringing together the interests of employers, academia, providers, insurers, and consumers. The benefits of this community approach – costs that are 20% below the national average with excellent quality and access – have been highlighted by everyone from President Clinton to the recently issued report by the Institute of Medicine noting Rochester’s annual cost-per-Medicare beneficiary was the lowest in the country.

A Century of Innovation and Collaboration
The key factors of Rochester’s pre-eminence include: an engaged business community, health planning to ensure adequate capacity and quality; locally controlled not-for-profit health systems and health insurance plans; shared infrastructure; and a nationally ranked medical school. Taken together, these factors have yielded evidence-based scientific discovery and progressive clinical practice, as well as a teaching program that has provided a reliable pipeline of medical personnel across our region.

Currently, the three Rochester-based providers train a total of 916 residents. On average, 42% of the graduating residents and fellows who train here remain here for their first professional position, which has enabled Rochester to avoid the severe physician shortages experienced elsewhere. An equal number of doctors who graduate from the University’s School of Medicine and Dentistry affiliate with the local non-University health systems as with the Medical Center.

Our community’s ability to attract and compete for the best students, physicians, and faculty is dependent on the quality and quantity of our academic research. Residents want to train at prestigious institutions with groundbreaking research and have access to the best physician mentors. These interrelated missions allow the next generation of practitioners and academic leaders in education, research, and community health to apply this knowledge to patient care. This translational research, which enables patients early access through clinical trials to emerging technology, drugs, and procedures, also generates new jobs and companies for the region.

A Community Solution to Maintaining Rochester’s Healthcare Excellence
Educating and training physicians would not be possible without both public and private support. As a source of medical innovation and discovery, academic medical centers and teaching hospitals are inherently more expensive to operate. In recognition of the public benefit of these interdependent missions and the differences in operating costs, the Medicare and Medicaid programs include special payment adjustments for graduate medical education (GME). In addition, health plans help support GME through rates they negotiate with teaching hospitals, but that funding model may not be sustainable. To ensure that our delivery system maintains its excellence and is able to meet the increased demand for physicians generated by the Affordable Care Act and an aging population, the health systems, health plans and business community leaders in this region are supporting an innovative financing approach for these essential community benefits. By spreading the cost of GME not currently funded by Medicare and Medicaid across the community and investing in community health infrastructure, we can ensure that the Rochester area maintains a necessary supply of skilled physicians.

The mechanism for collecting the public funding would be the current Covered Lives Assessment (CLA), which was created by the New York State Health Care Reform Act (HCRA) in 1996 and provides a regionally specific per-insured-person assessment that would be used to fund selected state-funded health care activities. The CLA is collected from health plans based on the numbers of “covered lives” in the Rochester region. Reflecting the community’s history of developing innovative solutions to local problems, the increase in the HCRA CLA to provide the earmarked funding would only be for the Rochester region.

Approximately $100 million in GME support is currently generated from the rates the area hospitals have negotiated with private payers, which covers additional expenses of operating hospitals with residents and fellows. The CLA adjustment will replace that support and each system will reduce its hospital inpatient and outpatient rates by the amount of that adjustment, so that this change will not trigger an increase in premiums and each hospital would receive the same payment as it does now.

We are also proposing the creation of two additional pools of $5 million each to support medical training infrastructure and community health initiatives. To protect the pipeline of new physicians, $5 million in new funding will support associated research and educational costs incurred by Medical Center faculty who teach students and residents and the other local hospitals. Moving funding from a voluntary contribution from a sole provider or payor to funding by all local private payors secures the University’s highly ranked research program, which boosts the quality of its education program.
Funding will also provide $5 million in support for valuable shared community health infrastructure (e.g., health planning, community-wide safety and quality programs, community measurement, elimination of health disparities, and information technology linkages) that improve quality, affordability, and accessibility through collaborative community efforts. A total of $2 million of this funding would be dedicated to the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency (FLHSA) and would serve as a local match for proposed state funding for regional health planning. The FLHSA would oversee investment in community health initiatives through a transparent, fiscally accountable, multi-stakeholder process. Currently, these services are funded by voluntary contributions with certain local health plans, hospitals and employers bearing a disproportionate share of the expense.

The anticipated total annual incremental funding of $10 million ($5 million for medical education and $5 million for community health infrastructure) would come only from non-governmental, private payers and would result in a 0.5% increase in premiums. An assessment is the only method to assure that all health plans and employers pay their fair share, rather than asking only certain health plans and employers to shoulder this expense for the benefit of the entire community. With these proposed changes, Rochester would retain among the lowest private health insurance costs in the country, and secure the reliability of its physician workforce from which this community has benefited for nearly a century.

SUPPORT FROM NEW YORK STATE
The University and its community partners seek support for a community-wide approach to fund critical medical education and healthcare infrastructure needs that will sustain the region’s high quality of care and access. We ask the Governor and the Legislature to support this proposal.
LABORATORY FOR LASER ENERGETICS

Support for Energy Research & Development

The University of Rochester is at the forefront of energy research in our nation with a vital component of these endeavors stemming from the University’s Laboratory for Laser Energetics (LLE). Thanks to the strong and consistent investment from New York State, dating back to 1983, through the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA), LLE continues to be one of the leading energy research facilities in the world, a significant source of innovation and talent, and one of the key economic drivers for the Finger Lakes region.

About the LLE
LLE is a unique national resource not found at any other university in the country. It is a vital component of our nation’s scientific capital and leadership, and key to strategic work on an independent energy future. LLE is home to the OMEGA laser, which is the second most powerful ultraviolet fusion laser in the world, and the OMEGA EP (Extended Performance) laser, a high-intensity, high-energy short-pulse laser. LLE serves as the principal laser research facility for two national laboratories (Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore). As one of the preeminent research facilities for inertial confinement fusion and high-energy density physics research, LLE serves a critical national security function and is at the forefront of efforts to demonstrate the viability of nuclear fusion as an inexhaustible, clean, and affordable source of energy. LLE is also a magnet for scientific talent and one of the leading institutions training the next generation of leaders in the fields of physics, optics, and material science.

Controlled nuclear fusion has the potential to serve as a clean, affordable, and plentiful source of energy for the future. Once realized, nuclear fusion will not only diversify the state’s energy portfolio, but will advance the state’s energy and economic well-being. While many challenges need to be overcome before fusion is an economically viable energy source, demonstrating the feasibility of inertial confinement fusion energy as an inexhaustible, safe, and efficient source of energy would ensure that New York is the leader in reaping the incredible benefits of this technology.

Support from New York State
Thanks to New York’s long-term support and commitment through NYSERDA, the University has leveraged substantial federal government and industry support. The approximately $700,000 in annual funding from NYSERDA has proven extremely valuable in demonstrating the State’s commitment to LLE and helping the University secure, on average, $60-$70 million per year in support from the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Thanks in part to the $691,000 included in the 2013-2014 Enacted State Budget, the U.S. Congress provided $64 million in funding pending for LLE in Fiscal Year 2014, an increase of more than $5 million over Fiscal Year 2013. The support from NYSERDA also has been critical in leveraging support for programs such as the Fusion Science Center, one of only two university research centers established by the DOE and supported by the New York State Legislature.

The OMEGA EP laser has 2,000 times more power than the entire U.S. electrical grid – making it among the most powerful lasers in the world.

Economic Impact
The economic impact of LLE on the Finger Lakes region is significant. Since its inception, LLE has attracted almost $2 billion to the state to support cutting-edge research, and more than 1,000 individuals are currently involved in the program. Through its National Laser Users Facility, the University attracts as many as 500 additional scientists each year from national laboratories, universities, and companies. Besides payroll and local purchases, LLE also provides a strong stimulus to the local economy through its advanced technology assets, which are the seeds that help attract and develop new companies and investors to New York State’s high-technology sector. QED Technologies, Sydor Instruments, and Lucid, Inc. are just a few of the local companies that were created – and continue to benefit us – as a result of LLE’s technology and research. The LLE is also nationally recognized as the only facility that trains graduate students in inertial fusion and thereby serves as a critical pipeline of future talent that is vitally important to our national and economic security.

Support from New York State
The University thanks Governor Cuomo for including $691,000 in the 2014-2015 Executive Budget for LLE and requests that this critical funding, administered by NYSERDA, be maintained and supported by the New York State Legislature.
The biggest impediments to the future growth of the University are the bottlenecks in the surrounding road network. The current infrastructure was built before the University’s recent strategic plans and as a result is congested, antiquated, and threatens public safety.

**Case for Action**

With several major capital projects underway, including College Town and the new Golisano Children’s Hospital, the University’s ability to grow any further is severely constrained. The existing highway network is periodically overwhelmed, and congestion and delays are experienced on a daily basis on Routes 15 and 15A at the interchanges with I-390, as well as in the surrounding road network. The high traffic volume is a major contributor to accidents, resulting in a public safety concern for our employees and our patients who need easy access to our emergency care facilities at Strong Memorial Hospital, the region’s only level one trauma center. With the additional traffic that is anticipated from the University, as well as from Monroe Community College, the Rochester Institute of Technology, and from the $200 million City Gate project, the levels of service on the existing network leading to and from the area around the University would degrade and, in many instances, result in failing levels of service at key intersections. If levels of service, delays, and congestion are not addressed, there will be an increased degradation of safety, more accidents with injury and property damage, and increased response costs.

**Description of the I-390/Kendrick Road Interchange Project**

The $100 million, multiphase I-390/Kendrick Road Interchange Project will support and accommodate increased traffic flow by making a number of new and structural improvements to I-390 at Routes 15 and 15A, East River Road, and Kendrick Road. This includes direct access to I-390 from the University via a proposed Kendrick Road ramp that would provide relief and a significant traffic benefit to the surrounding roadway network and residential neighborhoods. The proposed changes would also greatly improve access for emergency and non-emergency medical services to Strong Memorial Hospital, as well as contribute to the vitality and future growth of both the Rochester Institute of Technology and Monroe Community College.

**Economic Impact**

The I-390/Kendrick Road Interchange Project enjoys broad support within the community and has been identified as the region’s top infrastructure priority by the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council. The Center for Governmental Research estimated that this infrastructure will be instrumental in institutional growth and business development that could add more than 20,000 new jobs (both direct and indirect) to the region over the next 20 years. The construction phase of this project alone will create more than 850 jobs (both direct and indirect) and $42 million in labor income. Absent these changes, the University’s ability to grow and strengthen its role as a catalyst in New York State will be severely limited.

**As the Democrat and Chronicle reported, the intersection at Mt. Hope and Elmwood Avenue had the highest number of accidents locally over the last five years.**

**THANK YOU TO NEW YORK STATE**

The University, the City of Rochester, Monroe County, and other community partners thank Governor Cuomo and the New York State delegation for their support for the I-390/Kendrick Road Interchange Project. Funding for the final phases of this project have been committed, allowing this critical project to move forward and support economic growth.
INVEST IN HIGH-QUALITY CLINICAL CARE
Ensuring Access and Improving Quality

As one of the leading academic medical centers in the country, the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) receives funding from the State that has a profound effect on our education, teaching, research, and community health missions. As the safety-net for our most vulnerable citizens, URMC receives support from the Medicaid program that uniquely affects the robust, high-quality patient care services we provide at Strong Memorial Hospital, Thompson Health, Highland Hospital, Visiting Nurse Service, and The Highlands at Brighton.

Protect New York’s Hospitals
New York’s hospitals continue to grapple with years of past and future cuts to both Medicare and Medicaid, along with changing reimbursement formulas and other provisions directed by health care reform. Despite years of cumulative state budget cuts and exponential increases in enrollment, hospitals have managed costs and stayed below the Medicaid Global Spending Cap. Hospitals are becoming capital-starved and are having difficulties investing in information technology, care coordination, and integration of care, among other critical investments. Therefore, we urge the Legislature to reinstate the Medicaid trend factor and eliminate the 2% across-the-board Medicaid cut. We also urge the state to advance regulatory reform and workforce flexibility, including reform of the Certificate of Need (CON) process and opposition to nurse staffing ratios and rigid patient handling regulations, in order to reduce operational burdens placed on providers and enable them to increase access and meet the health care needs of their communities.

Preserve Graduate Medical Education (GME) funding
We support the preservation of GME funding in the state budget which allows academic medical centers to train new physicians and other health care workers to ensure that our state’s neediest patients continue to have access to the highest quality medical care. Projected health workforce shortages are alarming; the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that our nation’s physician supply will increase by only 7% in the next 10 years, while one-third of current physicians will reach retirement age, and the number of Americans over age 65 – the population most likely to have the greatest health needs – will increase a staggering 36%. The University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry is playing an important role in addressing these workforce shortages in our region with a medical school class of more than 500 medical residents, more than 100 fellow physicians in our graduate medical education program and more than 400 graduate students working towards doctoral degrees. A large percentage of these physicians remain in the Rochester region for their first professional position after graduation.

Protect New York’s Home Care Agencies
The Visiting Nurse Service (VNS) of Rochester and Monroe County primarily serves a Medicaid and Medicaid Managed Care Population, including those with multiple chronic illnesses and complex social and clinical needs. VNS has had to grapple with repeated, unsustainable cuts to Medicaid reimbursement rates while New York’s home care system undergoes a massive change and transition towards mandated enrollment of Medicaid/Medicare long-term care patients into managed care plans. In order to ensure that community home care agencies can survive these changes, home care transition support to assist in contracting with health plans is critical. These agencies also need regulatory relief to remove state mandates that no longer fit in a new care environment and stable fiscal policies to assure their continued transition to a new system.

Support for New York’s Academic Dental Centers
The five academic dental centers in New York State serve as the largest providers of comprehensive, preventive, primary, and specialty oral health care to Medicaid recipients, the uninsured, and the state’s most vulnerable groups. Eastman Institute for Oral Health provides 64% of all Medicaid dental care visits in Rochester each year. We are pleased New York State recognizes the importance of continuing adult Medicaid coverage for dentistry since prevention and early detection of disease are the cornerstones of decreasing Medicaid costs.

Support Telemedicine Services
Widespread development and use of telemedicine programs, such as the Medical Center’s Health-e-Access Telemedicine Program, will improve access to high-quality care and reduce health care costs by reducing emergency room visits. Additionally, telemedicine programs promote access to care, particularly in rural communities. While we are grateful that the State has recently expanded Medicaid reimbursement for telemedicine, we urge New York to remove restrictions on the originating sites for the telemedicine visit to include schools, child care settings, senior living communities, and similar locations. Further, both store-and-forward and real-time interactive modes of interaction should be reimbursable.

Avoid Harmful Changes to Medical Malpractice Law
With some of the highest malpractice awards in the nation, New York would benefit from tort reform that could save hundreds of millions of dollars in unnecessary health care costs for patients, providers and the state. At URMC alone, malpractice insurance premiums are approximately $22 million per year. If this already fragile situation is exacerbated it could have deep repercussions on the ability of hospitals and physicians to provide the best possible care to our patients. The URMC thanks the Governor and the Legislature for establishing the Medical Indemnity Fund for Neurologically-Impaired Children and urges opposition to measures that would undo this progress by raising the cost of premiums and adding unnecessary strain to a medical liability system that is no longer financially sustainable.
SUPPORT BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH
Discovering Cures and Growing the Economy

Scientific advances in health research hold the potential for new ways to understand, prevent, and treat diseases, as well as the ability to gauge the effectiveness of various medical interventions to improve the quality and delivery of health care. New York State possesses a significant academic infrastructure of skilled researchers who are not only in position to make significant strides in health discoveries, but also to grow and reshape the entire field of biomedical research and inevitably drive our regional economies.

Support Stem Cell Research
The Empire State Stem Cell Program (NYSTEM) has strengthened the University of Rochester’s groundbreaking research programs and its scientists are recognized as pioneers in the field. There are more than 40 labs working with stem cells at the University of Rochester Medical Center and these labs employ more than 260 scientists and technicians.

Our researchers have been able to demonstrate an impressive return on investment with state stem cell funding. In Rochester, since NYSTEM grants were first announced in January 2008, our researchers have been awarded more than $19 million in competitive grants through this program, yet our stem cell labs have more than $80 million in total research funding coming from the federal government and private sources.

Thanks to a NYSTEM shared facilities grants, the University recently celebrated the opening of a new research facility, the Upstate Stem Cell cGMP Facility (USCGF). This state-of-the-art facility will enable scientists at URMC and from other institutions across New York State to accelerate the process of translating their research into human clinical trials and, ultimately, into new treatments for a myriad of diseases, making Rochester central to the development of new cell-based therapies in humans. Already, two cGMP Facility projects, treatments for Macular Degeneration and Multiple Sclerosis, are expected to enter clinical trials in less than five years.

Our scientists have made great progress over the last several years unlocking the potential of stem cells to treat a long list of diseases, and New York State’s continued commitment to stem cell science will ensure it remains a world-class leader in biomedical research. We urge New York State to honor its $600 million commitment to NYSTEM.

Support Spinal Cord Injury Research
The New York State Spinal Cord Injury Research Board (SCIRB) has provided more than $70 million in research funding toward treatments for spinal cord injury since its inception in 1998. Funded by a surcharge on moving violation traffic tickets, this program produced tangible clinical and scientific advances from robotics-based therapies to highly effective cellular replacement therapies that have been transformative to patients with these injuries while reducing their health care costs and ensuring their ability to maintain active working lives. Research projects funded through this program have attracted significant federal and private research support, industry partnerships, and the development of multiple patents. We urge New York State to fully restore the Spinal Cord Injury Research Fund.

University of Rochester researchers have been awarded more than $19 million in competitive grants through NYSTEM.

Invest in Biomedical Research Infrastructure and Intellectual Capital
Federal sequestration has forced deep cuts to investment in research and higher education that have reduced opportunities for discovery and innovation, and threaten the future of America’s next generation of scientists and researchers. Responding to these cuts, states across the nation are increasing their spending on biomedical research. Massachusetts, Texas, California and Connecticut have all instituted multi-million dollar programs to fund biomedical translational research. Researchers who cannot secure competitive funding in New York State will undoubtedly look to these states as funding from the federal government is reduced. It is critical that New York State enhance its research faculty recruitment and retention efforts to ensure long-term sustainability and competitiveness in biomedicine. We encourage New York State to expand its investment in biomedical research by investing in the research infrastructure and intellectual capital necessary to maintain New York’s competitiveness.

We urge New York State to fully restore the Spinal Cord Injury Research Fund.
SUPPORT PROGRAMS THAT IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH

Building a Healthier Community and Eliminating Health Inequalities

State support for public health programs is critical to ensuring the development and expansion of academic-community health partnerships that are dedicated to improving the health of our community and have proven health outcomes with a track record of providing important services to the underserved in our state.

Support for Treatment and Prevention of Eating Disorders
The University of Rochester Medical Center is host to the Western New York Comprehensive Care Center for Eating Disorders, one of three Comprehensive Care Centers statewide. These Centers provide an unparalleled, comprehensive range of specialized clinical services for patients with eating disorders. In addition to medical and psychological services, the Centers conduct community outreach and prevention. Over the past five years, the Centers evaluated, referred, and treated in excess of 10,000 patients, many of whom would have experienced delayed care, or not have received appropriate care, leading to more expensive episodes of care, and potentially death. These Centers are providing tremendous services with the limited state funding they share. We urge full funding of this program to continue the essential care management and coordination these Centers provide.

Support for Cancer Services Program
The Cancer Services Program is a preventive service that pays for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings for men and women, ages 40-64, who are uninsured or underinsured. In addition to the cancer screening, the program also provides diagnostic services in the event cancer is found. The Cancer Services Program of Monroe County is operated by the University of Rochester Medical Center’s Center for Community Health. This is a cost-effective state-wide program that has resulted in nearly $46 million in annual savings to the State through early detection and treatment. We urge full restoration of the program to continue to make it possible for thousands of Monroe County residents to receive life saving cancer screenings and treatments without having finances as a barrier to their care.

Support for School Based Health Centers
New York’s School Based Health Centers provide accessible, integrated health and behavioral health services while supporting a strong public health mission of screening, prevention, and crisis diversion. The University of Rochester sponsors the School Based Health Centers at East High School and at the Frederick Douglass Campus, which are two of the more than 200 School Based Health Centers statewide. Our services include complete physical exams, health screenings, risk behavior screenings, care for acute and chronic illnesses, medications (dispensed on site and via prescription), mental health counseling, reproductive health, laboratory services, sexually transmitted disease and pregnancy testing and prevention, health education, and immunizations. Students receive services without regard to insurance status and are not charged any fees. We urge full funding for these Centers to continue the commitment the State has already made in providing high quality health services to children. We thank the Governor for his support and urge full funding for these Centers to continue the commitment the state has already made in providing high quality health services to children.

Support for Diversity in Medicine Program
With the support of the New York State Department of Health, the Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY) have offered an array of programs across the state with the intent of expanding the pool of students choosing careers in health and medicine. In particular, the AMSNY Post Baccalaureate Program provides academic enrichment and support to students from educationally or economically underserved backgrounds with the goal of expanding the pool of underrepresented students in medicine. Students are identified by a medical school to receive formal mentoring, advising and a tailored curriculum. After completing the one-year program, 94% of these students have matriculated in a New York State medical school. We urge full funding of $1.7 million for the AMSNY Diversity in Medicine Programs in order to ensure these programs are able to continue without interruption in the upcoming academic year.

Support the Children’s Environmental Health Centers
This statewide network is an efficient and cost-effective approach to diagnosing, treating and preventing disease of toxic environmental origin in New York State’s children. Thanks to state funding, the Rochester Regional Children’s Environmental Health Center (RRCEHC) was established in March 2007 and created an infrastructure dedicated to the education and outreach concerning environmental exposures in children and mothers. Despite the early success of this initiative and the completion of state funding, chronic diseases of environmental origin remains an increasing problem for children in New York State. Reestablishing the statewide, regional network of Children’s Environmental Health Centers will efficiently and effectively improve the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of children’s diseases caused by environmental factors; better quantify, and qualify children’s diseases of environmental origin; and strengthen and expand educational programs in children’s environmental health for professionals at all levels. We urge the Governor and the Legislature to include budget funding to reestablish the Children’s Environmental Health Centers in New York State.

Our School Based Health Center at East High School has more than 4,500 patient visits annually.

Just as I was encouraged by AMSNY’s Post-Baccalaureate program, I hope to encourage young students to pursue their dreams and help them realize that becoming a physician is both possible and rewarding. — Georgia Davies, University of Rochester School of Medicine, Class of 2016
SUPPORT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
Ensuring Access and Affordability

We commend New York State for demonstrating its commitment to funding student aid and opportunity programs that are critically important to hundreds of thousands of students enrolled in colleges and universities across New York State. Particularly through times of fiscal challenge, New York must prioritize investments to ensure all students have access to high-quality higher education and the tools they need to lead our state to future success. Support from the State in strategic investments in research capacity and activities, as well as funding for student financial aid, fosters the type of innovative programs that have long distinguished the University of Rochester and benefitted the entire state.

Support the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)
The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) provides grants to more than 300,000 state residents enrolled full-time in an undergraduate program at a college or university through New York State. This year, more than 800 students at the University of Rochester will rely on TAP to help pay for college. TAP remains a critical resource for helping New York State students access higher education in their home state. We thank the Governor for fully funding TAP and we urge the Legislature to maintain New York’s commitment to this program.

Support for Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP)
The Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), jointly sponsored by the University of Rochester and New York State Department of Education, provides supportive services and financial aid to New York State students. The program attracts students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, and is especially attractive for those students and families because of their economic and educational backgrounds may not have considered attending the University of Rochester. We currently have almost 100 students participating in the HEOP program. Our program boasts an 88% graduation rate and 82% go on to graduate or professional studies or are employed upon graduation. The University supports level funding for HEOP, and remains hopeful for more funding in the future to meet the growing demand for this program.

808 University of Rochester students are relying on TAP this year.

Support Bundy Aid
Direct Institutional “Bundy” Aid supports independent colleges and universities in New York State by providing modest funding based on the number and level of degrees each campus confers. At the University of Rochester, these funds are passed along directly to our students to provide scholarship assistance for New York families that have exhausted other forms of financial aid. Last year, these funds ensured that 933 students had the ability to pursue higher education at the University. While the approximately $1.1 million the University of Rochester receives through Bundy Aid may seem small in comparison to the $89 million in overall scholarship support we provide to our undergraduates annually, it remains vitally important to the overall tuition assistance we are able to provide to our students. We thank the Governor for level funding Bundy Aid and urge the Legislature to maintain this funding.

UR’s Bundy Aid provided scholarships to more than 900 students last year.

Support for Nursing Education Programs
The University of Rochester urges continued support for the Senator Pat McGee Scholarship Program and Nursing Faculty Loan Forgiveness Program, as well as the High Needs Nursing Program, in order to continue to address nursing shortages in Upstate New York. A number of outstanding nursing students have been able to attend the University of Rochester’s School of Nursing, with an average annual award of $14,630 per student, thanks to the scholarship support available through these valuable programs. We thank the Governor for fully funding these programs and urge the legislature to maintain support.

“The Senator Patricia McGee Scholarship gave me the opportunity to attend UR’s Doctor of Nursing Program to obtain the skills I needed to evaluate and implement a program for foster parents of traumatized children at Hillside’s RTF program in Auburn, NY, and make a difference for those families.” - Rebecca Golding, Class of 2013

Support for Science and Technology Entry Programs (STEP)
The Science and Technology Entry Programs (STEP) have played a critical role in expanding the pipeline of underrepresented, educationally and economically disadvantaged students in medicine. The University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry is part of a statewide consortium with the Associated Medical Schools of NY (AMSNY) that provides STEP programs to facilitate students’ entry to and graduation from college and health professions schools by providing rigorous academic enrichment that is tailored to the needs of students. In the past ten years, the institutions partnering on the AMSNY STEP program have served more than 4,500 students. This past year, 100 students from 33 different high schools participated in the University of Rochester’s program. To continue the goals of meeting the forecasted growth in demand for health professionals and to increase the numbers of underrepresented minorities in these fields, we urge level-funding for STEP.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION
Supporting University-Industry Collaboration and Technology Transfer

At the University of Rochester, we are proud to be a national leader in translating discoveries into new technologies and practical applications that treat and cure disease, improve our national security, and help our nation move toward a sustainable clean energy future. Some notable University technologies include our work in vaccines (Prevnar, Gardasil, Ceravix) and our advancements in LASIK surgery that have improved the vision of tens of thousands of people. Our innovation ecosystem, which includes many state programs such as NYSTAR’s Center for Advanced Technology (Center for Emerging and Innovative Sciences) and a Regional Technology Development Center (High Tech Rochester), has been cited as a model. With New York State’s support, we can do more to harness innovation and discoveries into commercially viable technologies and companies.

Support the Centers for Advanced Technology (CATs)
Despite acute challenges in the local economy with the downsizing of Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch+Lomb, the University’s Center for Emerging & Innovative Sciences (CEIS) has had success generating growth in optics, photonics, and imaging through industry-university collaboration and technology transfer for more than 20 years. As one of only 15 CATs statewide, CEIS applies world-class research at the University of Rochester, Rochester Institute of Technology, and Cornell University toward the commercialization of technologies and products to help meet industry needs. Over the last five years, CEIS has reported more than $200 million in economic impact, constituting a 32:1 return on the state’s investment. Last year alone, CEIS had an over $38 million impact. In addition, CEIS was awarded a three-year, $2.6 million federal grant in 2012 to further leverage state support and accelerate the growth of the region’s optics, photonics, and imaging companies. We thank the Governor and the State Legislature for their support of the CAT program and CEIS and urge continued funding in the 2014-15 Budget. We also urge the State to redesignate CEIS as a CAT, which is essential to the future of New York’s optics, photonics, and imaging industry.

Support for the Regional Economic Development Councils
The University is proud to participate in Governor Cuomo’s Regional Economic Development Councils and urges support for a fourth round of funding to support the priorities and strategies outlined in the Finger Lakes’ comprehensive strategic plan entitled Accelerating our Transformation. Through unprecedented collaboration and the participation of more 300 Council and Work Group members, we have developed a shared vision for the region’s economic future. Thanks to support for projects such as the Health Sciences Center for Computational Innovation, College Town, and High Tech Rochester’s Finger Lakes Business Accelerator, the region’s transformation is well underway. We thank the Governor for his leadership and the State Legislature for its support and urge continued support for transformative projects such as the Finger Lakes Business Accelerator Cooperative and the University’s new Institute for Data Science.

Support Business Incubation
High Tech Rochester (HTR) is an affiliate of the University of Rochester and the region’s only state and federally-designated business incubator. HTR’s programs and services support innovation and growth across all stages of the company life cycle. HTR is home to New Energy Xcelerator in UpState NY (NEXUS-NY), one of three clean-energy Proof-of-Concept Centers funded by NYSERDA, aimed at identifying and commercializing clean energy technologies in the Upstate New York region. HTR also manages and coordinates NYSERDA’s statewide effort to place highly experienced and accomplished business executives – known as entrepreneurs-in-residence – with new and emerging energy-related companies, helping them grow, gain viability, and create revenue. In December, an HTR and RIT led consortium that includes all the regional incubators was designated an Innovation Hot Spot. Thanks to support from New York State, HTR has had an estimated economic impact of nearly $500 million and created or retained more than 2,500 jobs over the last five years. HTR’s Business Accelerator is estimated to create more than 1,000 new jobs in the form of new start-ups and business expansion. We urge the state to continue to support HTR and their efforts to catalyze business creation, expansion, and growth to accelerate job creation across the Finger Lakes region.

Support Venture Capital Funding
The availability of seed and venture capital funding has been identified as a challenge to New York’s innovation ecosystem. Despite the fact that New York universities rank second nationally in total research spending, New York attracts only 4% of the nation’s venture capital investment while California attracts 47%. Excell Partners, Inc., an affiliate of the University of Rochester, located at Eastman Business Park, works in partnership with the state to manage a state-supported fund which provides pre-seed and seed stage financing to high-tech start-up companies in Upstate New York. Due to the high risks inherent in very early stage investing, few venture funds make seed investments, particularly in this region. Yet a tremendous research base exists in Upstate NY to generate commercially viable technologies, particularly in the life sciences. Excell Partners is positioned to tap into this research base, help identify promising technologies, and accelerate the creation of new technology-based businesses with high potential for commercial success. Excell was one of five investment funds awarded funding through the State’s Innovate NY program due to its strong track record and large geographic impact, and is among the most active seed funds in the country. The University and Excell strongly support the Innovation Venture Capital Fund included in last year’s budget and seek continued opportunities to partner with the State to provide early-stage, high-potential growth companies with the critical resources needed to propel New York’s innovation economy.