

From: John M. Lewis, MD
Sent: Thursday, January 03, 2008 4:20 PM
To: CT Strategic Plan
Subject: Economic Strategic Planning Meetings

Hello,

Please find attached my suggestion for the upcoming meeting.

My contact information is below.

Yours truly,

John M. Lewis, MD
Waterbury, CT 06708

Economic Development in Connecticut
Opportunities in Health Care

John M. Lewis, M.D., FACOG

My name is John Lewis. I'm an obstetrician who has been delivering babies in the Waterbury area for the past two decades. Although I'm affiliated with Women's Health USA, a large physician practice group in Connecticut, my remarks here are my own, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of my practice group.

I. Economic Opportunities in Health Care

To enable Connecticut medical entrepreneurs to exploit economic opportunities in health care, government must re-think its role in the health care system. It must change the rules to empower medical business entrepreneurs to bring innovation to health care in Connecticut to lower costs, to improve transparency, to promote competition, and to improve the quality and safety of the health care Connecticut consumers receive.

Examples of entrepreneur-driven innovation are given in Dr. Richard L. Reece's excellent book, "Innovation-Driven Health Care: 34 Key Concepts for Transformation". Dr. Reece, a Connecticut physician, notes that the most important recent innovations in health care have been driven by physician-entrepreneurs, not by insurers, employers, hospitals, public policy-makers, or government. Reece emphasizes the importance of modern health care information technology in transforming physician business models to ensure physician survival and prosperity.

Beyond the narrower concerns of economic survival are entrepreneurial opportunities for health information technology innovation that can create jobs in distressed areas of the state. Building the health information technology infrastructure of the future could bring prosperity to, for example, the Naugatuck River Valley, which has suffered from the decline of older industries. A vision for a growing economy means creating a business culture that welcomes medical entrepreneurs and the jobs they bring.

II. The Role of Government

Connecticut government can enable dramatic improvements in the quality and safety of patient care, transparency of health care information, increased competition in health care, plus lowered costs, by working to improve health information technology in the state. E-Health Connecticut is an example of a government-backed initiative that is necessary, but not sufficient, to bring health care in Connecticut into the 21st century. E-Health Connecticut's website is here: <http://www.ehealthconnecticut.org/>.

I would add that government should compel health plans, as the current “deep pockets” in health care, to subsidize physician implementation of health information technologies that reduce administration costs, improve patient safety, and enable physicians to share health care data with each other, with hospitals, and with insurers, consistent with existing regulations to protect patient privacy and security. Without some form of subsidy, most physicians cannot carry the cost of acquisition and implementation of information technology by themselves.

III. Conclusion

As Dr. Richard L. Reece states, medical innovation is driven by medical entrepreneurs. Creating an environment in which entrepreneurs, consumers, and taxpayers can benefit from improved health information technology, improved transparency, improved patient safety, and increased competition is an important role of government. Connecticut must adopt a vision of a health care economy that empowers its medical entrepreneurs, innovators, and consumers. That kind of innovation is something Connecticut can export, as its health care economy grows.

From: Pat Keavney
Sent: Tuesday, January 08, 2008 1:21 PM
To: CT Strategic Plan
Subject: Forum Response

Dear Dr. McMillen,

I attended the Economic Strategic Plan Forum at Naugatuck Valley Community College on Thursday, January 3. I did not speak that evening but wish to share my views with you at this time.

I am the vice president of the State Vocational Federation of Teachers (SVFT, Local 4200A). We represent the approximately 1500 full and part-time teachers who work in the 20 Connecticut Technical High Schools. My opinion and that of my fellow SVFT officers is that no plan to move Connecticut's economy forward for the next five, ten or twenty years would be complete or comprehensive without the involvement of the Technical High School System. Connecticut is fortunate to have 20 fully staffed and equipped educational training centers, some of which are undergoing extensive and costly remodeling, that can train a very competitive workforce for today and tomorrow.

We are interested in sharing our ideas and look forward to establishing a dialogue with you.

Sincerely,
Patricia Keavney