

August 20, 2003

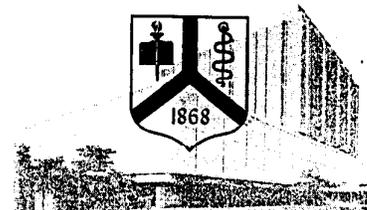
The Honorable Everett Alvarez, Jr.
Chairman
CARES Commission
Department of Veterans Affairs
John D. Dingell VA Medical Center
4646 John R. Street, Room B-1290
Detroit, Michigan 48201

Dear Mr. Alvarez:

Thank you for the opportunity of providing written testimony to the VA CARES Commission. I wish to begin by emphasizing the superb relationship that the Wayne State University School of Medicine has with the Detroit VA Medical Center. The importance of the clinical care, education and research missions of the Detroit VA Medical Center are critical to our common success. We have a history of joint use of facilities and maintain excellent communications through bi-monthly meetings with the VA (Affiliation Partnership Council).

The Detroit VA Medical Center has historically been an excellent resource in this network as a provider of tertiary care services. The relationship between the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center and Detroit has allowed for some specialization of services in order to reduce costly facility, staff and equipment duplication. We certainly believe that this relationship between the two VAs should continue and we are ready to cooperate with our colleagues at the University of Michigan in providing the specialty services necessary to support our combined veteran population.

Finally, we appreciate the opportunity to participate in the CARES process and have not only received routine briefings from the local VA leadership, but have also been invited to participate in the planning process. We continue to look forward to providing further input into the process as the commissions completes its work.



Once again, we appreciate the opportunity of providing this brief testimony to the Commission and wish you well in your efforts to provide the most efficient and effective care to our veteran population.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Crissman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

John D. Crissman, M.D.

Dean

JDC:tvv



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August 13, 2003

Richard E. Larson
Executive Director, CARES Commission
Office of the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs

Dear Mr. Larson:

Thank you for the invitation to provide a statement to the CARES Commission. The University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) has enjoyed a long and mutually beneficial affiliation with the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAHS), Ann Arbor, MI. Through extensive collaborative activities, UMHS and VAAHS work together to improve the health of veterans and other citizens of Michigan and beyond. The UMHS-VAAHS partnership spans all three missions: patient care, education, and research.

The University of Michigan is supportive of the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) process, and its goals of assuring the highest-quality care for veterans and the optimal use of VA resources and facilities. UMHS leadership has participated actively in this process as it relates to the University, through the involvement of: John E. Billi, MD, Associate Dean and Associate Vice President for Medical Affairs; Lloyd Jacobs, MD, Chief Operating Officer of UM Hospitals & Health Centers, Larry Warren, Executive Director of UM Hospitals & Health Centers; Richard Coffey, PhD, Director of Health System Planning, and myself. As the VA proceeds with the CARES process, UMHS looks forward to a continued productive relationship with VAAHS, and working together to meet the evolving health care needs of veterans.

Our relationship with VAAHS is very important from the perspective of all three missions of UMHS. We benefit from the opportunity to work with the VA, a nationally recognized leader in medical information technology, patient safety, and quality improvement. Ongoing relationships include:

1. The VA funds approximately 100 full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) of UM faculty physicians. These physicians provide high quality primary care and specialty services for veterans at the VAAHS.
2. The VA is a valuable clinical education site for the University, funding approximately 108 house officers (resident physicians), who provide care for veterans. Approximately 550 residents and 300 University of Michigan medical students complete some portion of their training annually at the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center, under the supervision of UM faculty.

This educational affiliation allows new generations of physicians to train in a high quality setting, while serving the needs of the veteran population. The educational affiliation is facilitated by Eric Young, MD, Chief of Staff at the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center, serving as the Assistant Dean for Veterans Affairs of the Medical School. In addition to the UM Medical School, VAAAHS has active affiliations with the UM schools of Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health, and Social Work, and serves as a training site for those programs.

3. The VA is a primary research partner with UMHS. VAAAHS researchers receive in excess of \$22 million annually in VA and non-VA research funding. In addition, both VA and UMHS provide modern research facilities and associated support services.
4. UMHS and VAAAHS have had shared facility arrangements for a number of years. For example, UMHS and VAAHS have provided backup care for each other's patients during replacement and downtime of imaging and radiation therapy equipment, and jointly procured MRI and PET technology. UMHS currently leases facilities, equipment, and staff to provide gastrointestinal procedures within unused VAAAHS capacity.

Representatives at the VAAAHS and UMHS have been meeting for several months investigating the potential for additional mutually beneficial arrangements to share facilities, equipment, faculty, and staff within the context of the CARES process. Multiple options are currently being considered, which will maintain or even enhance veterans' access to clinical services. These collaborations have been facilitated by the recent change in the Michigan Certificate of Need (CoN) legislation that allows UMHS and VAAAHS to collaborate on services without the requirement of obtaining CoNs.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to comment. I regret that a calendar conflict keeps me from appearing before the Commission at its August 22nd meeting in Detroit.

Sincerely,



Allen S. Lichter, M.D., Dean
*Newman Family Professor
of Radiation Oncology*

cc Congressman John D. Dingell
Senator Carl Levin
Senator Debbie Stabenow

ASL:RJC;jk